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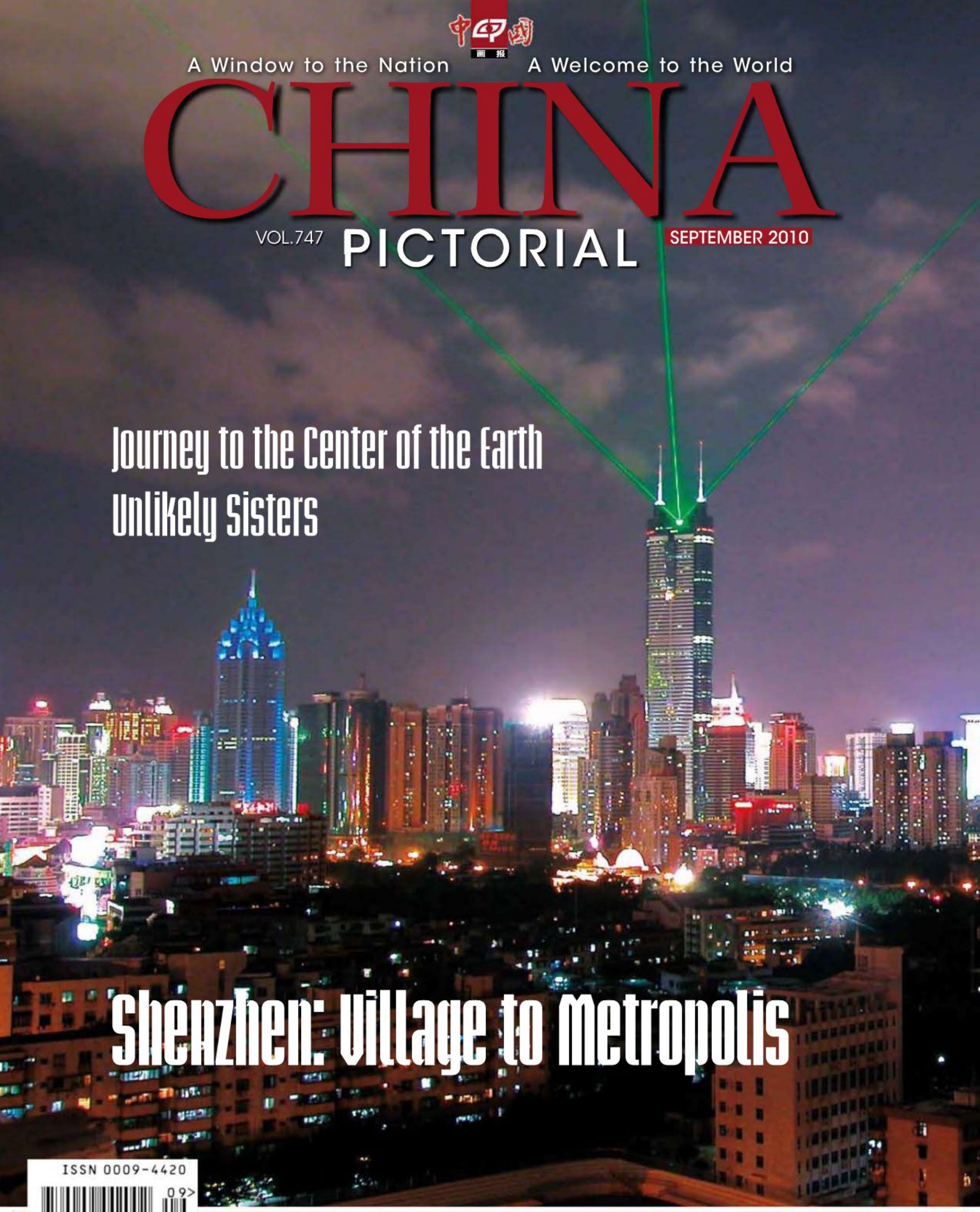
CHINA PICTORIAL

VOL.747

SEPTEMBER 2010



Journey to the Center of the Earth

Unlikely Sisters

Shenzhen: Village to Metropolis

ISSN 0009-4420

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9 770009 442002

邮发代号2-903 CN11-1429/Z
国内零售价：10元

USA	$5.10	UK	£3.20	Australia	$9.10
Europe	€5.20	Canada	$7.80	Turkey	TL. 10.00

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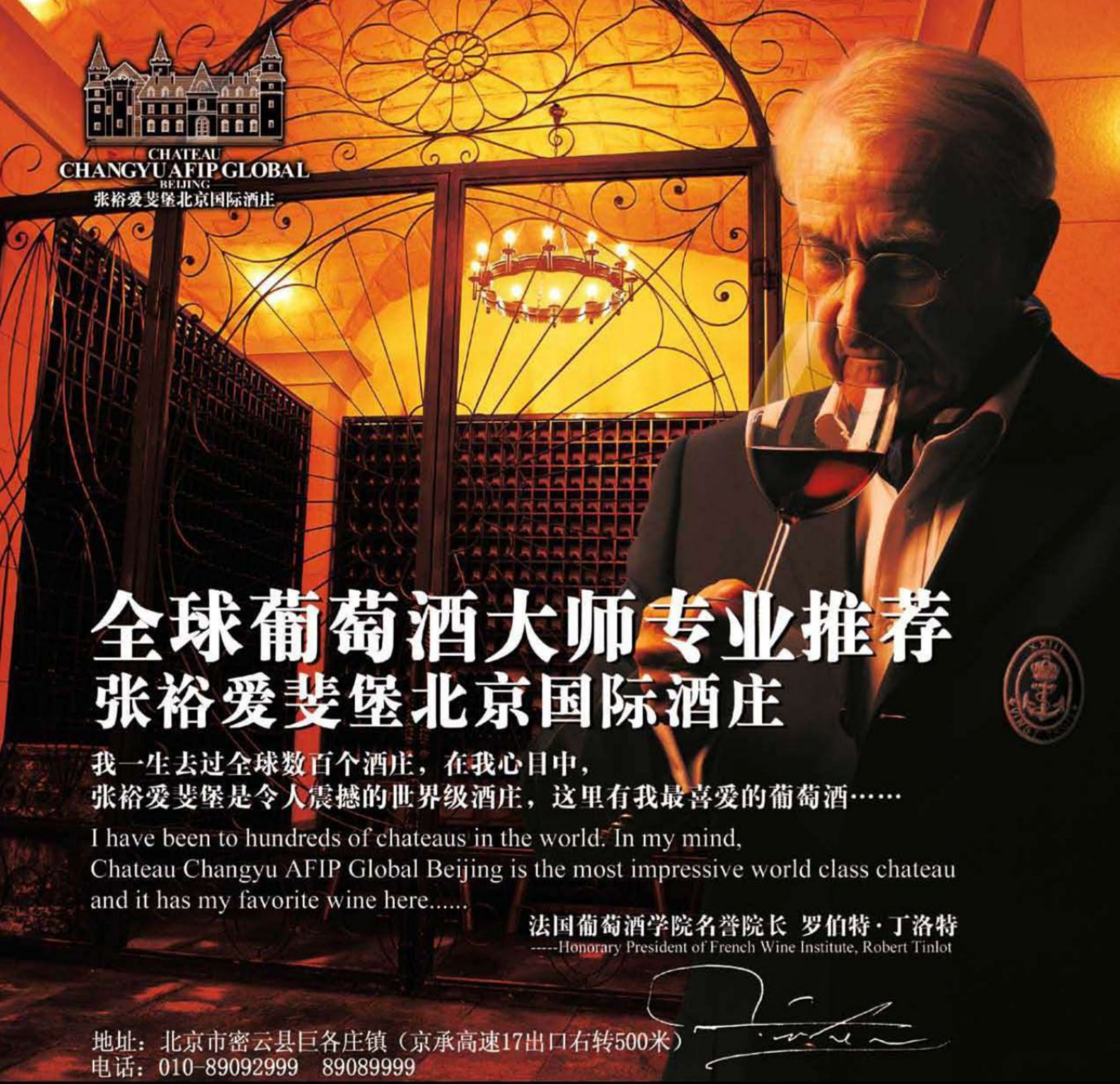

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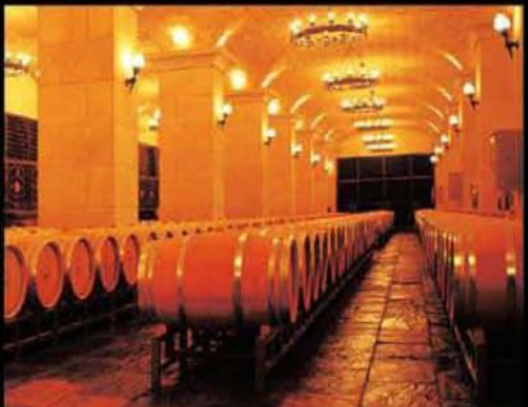

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CHINA PICTORIAL

SEPTEMBER 2010

CON

Administrative Agency: **主管**：中国外文出版发行事业局
China International Publishing Group （中国国际出版集团）

Publisher: China Pictorial Publications **主办**：人民畫報社

Address: **社址**：
33 Chegongzhuang Xilu, 北京市海淀区车公庄西路33号
Haidian, Beijing 100048, China **邮编**：100048
Email: cnpictorial@gmail.com

Director and Editor-in-Chief: **社长兼总编辑**：
Xu Bu 徐步

Members of the Editorial Board: **编委会**：
Xu Bu, Wang Jiyu, Li Xia, 徐步、王继雨、李霞、
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Editorial Department Directors: **编辑部主任**：
Tan Xingyu, Wang Yufan 谭星宇、王寓帆

Editors and Translators: **本期发稿编辑、翻译**：
Liu Haile, Lu Anqi, Tan Xingyu, 刘海乐、鲁安琪、谭星宇、
Wang Dongmei, Wang Yongqiang, 王冬梅、王永强、
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Operation: Zhu Chunyi **编务**：朱春一

Art Supervisor: Jin Xiang **艺术总监**：金向
Designers: E-jin **设计**：依金

Advertising Department Director: **广告部主任**：
Leng Hanbing 冷寒冰
Telephone: 010-88417354 **电话**：010—88417354
Fax: 010-88417419 **传真**：010—88417419

Publishing and Distribution Director: **出版发行部主任**：
Yu Jia 于佳
Telephone: 010-68412660 **电话**：010—68412660
Fax: 010-68715314 **传真**：010—68715314

Remittance to: **邮购收款人**：
Publishing and Distribution Department, China Pictorial
人民画报社出版发行部

Legal Adviser: Yue Cheng **法律顾问**：岳成

Printing: C & C Joint Printing Co., Ltd., Beijing
印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司

Overseas Subscriptions and Distribution:
China International Book Trading Corporation (Guoji Shudian),
35 Chegongzhuang Xilu,
P.o. Box 399, Beijing 100044, China
Telephone: 86-10-68413849
Fax: 86-10-68412166
Email: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn
www.cibtc.com.cn

出版日期 每月1日
国内刊号：CN11—1429/Z
国际刊号：ISSN0009—4420
京海工商广字第0121号

In China, subscriptions are available at any post office.

Subscription and distribution agency in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan:
Hong Kong Peace Book Company, Ltd.
17/F., Paramount Building, 12 Ka Yip Street,
Chai Wan, Hong Kong

Visit *China Pictorial* on the Internet:
www.china-pictorial.com.cn

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Shenzhen at night. by Wan Quan

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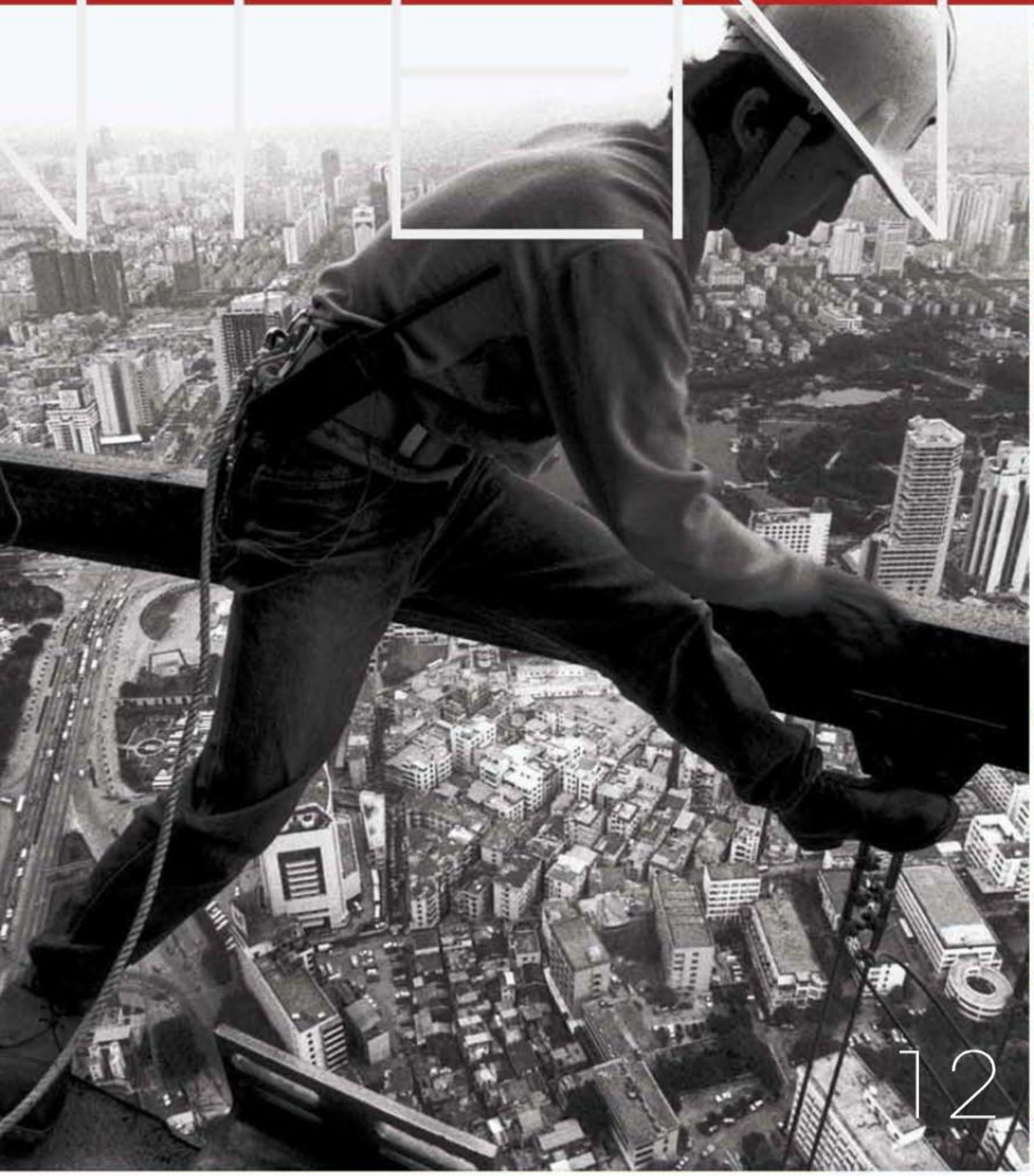


Travel Destination of the Month

CHINA

A Valley of Color

The coming of fall marks the beginning of the most glorious season in Jiuzhaigou valley, which lies in Nanping County of Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. It is eye-catching throughout the year, but between mid-September and late October, autumnal colors coalesce to form a magical landscape unlike anywhere else on earth.

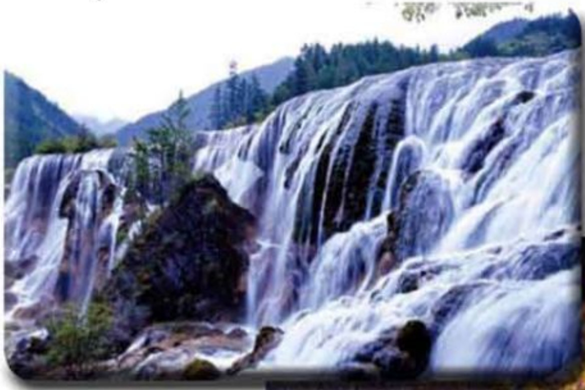
At this time of year, with its plentiful forest cover, Jiuzhaigou boasts a cool and pleasant climate. Around mid-September the rainy season ends and its lakes and waterfalls become even more magnificent. Also during this time, food and accommodation within the scenic area are slightly cheaper. In late October, vibrant maple leaves cover the mountains – a favorite scene for nature photographers. This period is generally the peak season to visit the valley, so for tourists prioritizing relaxation and tranquility, an earlier visit in September is definitely better.

Jiuzhaigou boasts abundant animals and plants, with primeval forests and more than 10 varieties of rare animals including the giant panda. Other attractions worth seeing are the Tibetan wooden houses, pontoon bridges, and mills.

Most visitors come via a travel agency, due to their convenience and experience. Typically, tours spend one day in the valley, another day in nearby Huanglong Valley, and usually also take in Emei Mountain and Leshan City, home of the famous giant carved Buddha. For independent travelers, warm clothes and umbrellas are a necessity. Temperatures can dip drastically at night.

Beijing
Jiuzhaigou
Chengdu

Waterfalls are splendid in September, just after the rainy season. **IC**



A breathtaking view.

Post World Cup Tourism

To celebrate the successful hosting of the World Cup 2010 and further promote the country's tourism, the South Africa Tourism Board recently held a press conference in Beijing.

The board believes that with the successful hosting of the 2010 World Cup, South Africa has presented a new image to the world. With more Chinese discovering this colorful land, its tourism industry is preparing to receive more guests.

Qinghai Tourism Promotion

Recently, Qinghai's tourism publicity campaign, themed "Yushu is Never Down and Qinghai is Forever Green," was held in Beijing. More than 100 travel agencies and businesses from all over China participated.

With abundant tourism resources, Qinghai boasts a unique landscape, amazing culture, and fascinating folk customs. The event aims to rejuvenate Qinghai's tourism industry after the recent Yushu Earthquake.

Welcome to Henan

On July 26, a tourism publicity campaign organized by Henan Provincial Government was held in Frankfurt, Germany. Over 150 representatives from Germany's tourism, commerce, and media industries attended the event.

Germany is one of the major tourist destinations for Henan residents, and in 2009, the country ranked sixth in terms of foreign nationals visiting Henan. More and more Germans are visiting Henan to see what the province has to offer.

China to Drive Global Luxury Travel Industry

Industry insiders at the 4th Asia Luxury Travel Market exhibition in Shanghai predicted a resurgence in the luxury travel market, with the Asia-Pacific region and China in particular leading the way.

This year's exhibition, which opened recently at the Shanghai Exhibition Center in Jing'an District, attracted 15 percent more buyers and 15 percent more exhibitors offering high-end hotels, resorts and other travel options, compared to last year.

International Dragon Boat Competition

The two-day Hong Kong International Dragon Boat competition along Victoria harbor ended on July 25, with more than 100 teams from home and abroad participating. Colorful decorations, stages, bands and music, as well as plenty of beer and delicacies to sample, created a unique carnival atmosphere.

Hong Kong is seen as the birth place for modern dragon boat racing. In 1976, the first international dragon boat race was held in Hong Kong. Since then, the sport's popularity has gradually spread to other regions.

Molines introduces Languedoc wines. by Tan Xingyu

LANGUEDOC
PAYS D'OC

Fine Wine

On July 20, France's Languedoc Council of Wine hosted the press conference "Witnessing Languedoc's Future" in Beijing. Christine Molines, the export manager, introduced wines from Languedoc, the largest grape production area in the world. In a new twist, the wine was served with Chinese cuisine.

Russian actresses perform for visitors at Zuohai Park's aquarium, Fuzhou. IC

Dancing in the Water

On July 27, the opening ceremony of Fujian Aquatic and Wild Animals Protection Campaign was launched at Fuzhou Zuohai Park's aquarium. Workers with marine fishery agencies, environmental protection volunteers, and interested children came to the aquarium to enjoy underwater performances and gain a better understanding of the relationship between humans and marine life.

This year has been dubbed International Biodiversity Year, and China's Ministry of Agriculture decided to launch a national campaign promoting aquatic and wild animals protection from July 18 to August 17.

Population Surge

Beijing Municipal People's Congress revealed recently that the Chinese capital now has 19.72 million inhabitants, a growth of over 3 percent in the past two years. Previous estimates predicted that the city's population would swell to that level a decade later than it has.

The massive growth in Beijing's population, which is mainly comprised of young adults, plays an important role in the booming development of the city. Unfortunately, say critics, it also brings more pressure on the city's resources.

July 14, 2010 – Commuters squeeze into a train at a stop on Beijing Subway Line 1. by Li Wen/Xinhua

The Second Zhongshan Cup

On July 29, the Second Zhongshan Cup, an Overseas Chinese Literature Award, was launched in Beijing.

Literary works in Chinese in a variety of media, such as novels, poetry, essays, biographies, dramas, TV or film scripts are eligible for submission. Works are required to be published after 1949 on Chinese mainland or related to the theme of "overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution."

The submission deadline will be extended until July 2011. Awards will be presented in November 2011 in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, to honor Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

第二届"中山杯"华侨华人文学奖
新闻发布会

A press conference held to announce the Zhongshan Cup.

Transformers Land in Shanghai

The largest official gathering of Transformers fans congregated on July 30 at Landmark Brand Expo in Shanghai.

Hasbro Inc. is promoting the first ever official Transformers fan convention to be held in Asia. Building on the tremendous momentum of popular brands around the world, an extensive collection of Transformers collectables were presented during the expo.

During the visually stunning exhibit, fans were also invited to experience a wide variety of offerings from the brand's current toy line.

CHEVROLET
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2011 SPRING

Ready to meet his fans. IC

Rare Jellyfish Found in Guizhou

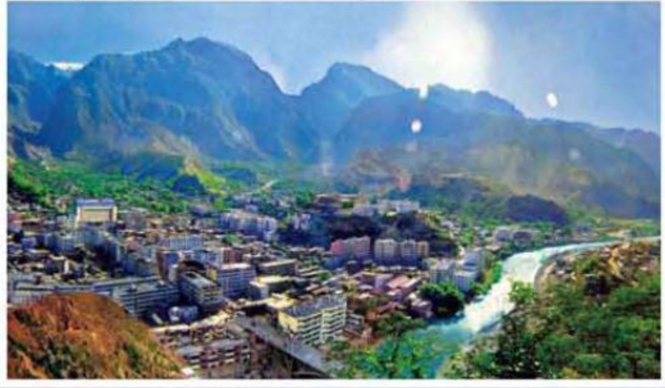
Recently, large amounts of precious craspedacusta sowerbyi were found at Wuyanghe National Scenic Zone, Zhenyuan County, Guizhou Province, which attracted many visitors. A freshwater jellyfish, craspedacusta sowerbyi is on the endangered species list. Of the 11 known craspedacusta sowerbyi in the world, nine exist in China.

In 2002, the creature was classified as "extremely endangered" and is sometimes referred to as the giant panda of the water.

Craspedacusta sowerbyi in a water tank. IC

Devastating Landslide Hits Zhouqu

Zhouqu before the devastating mudslide. Xinhua

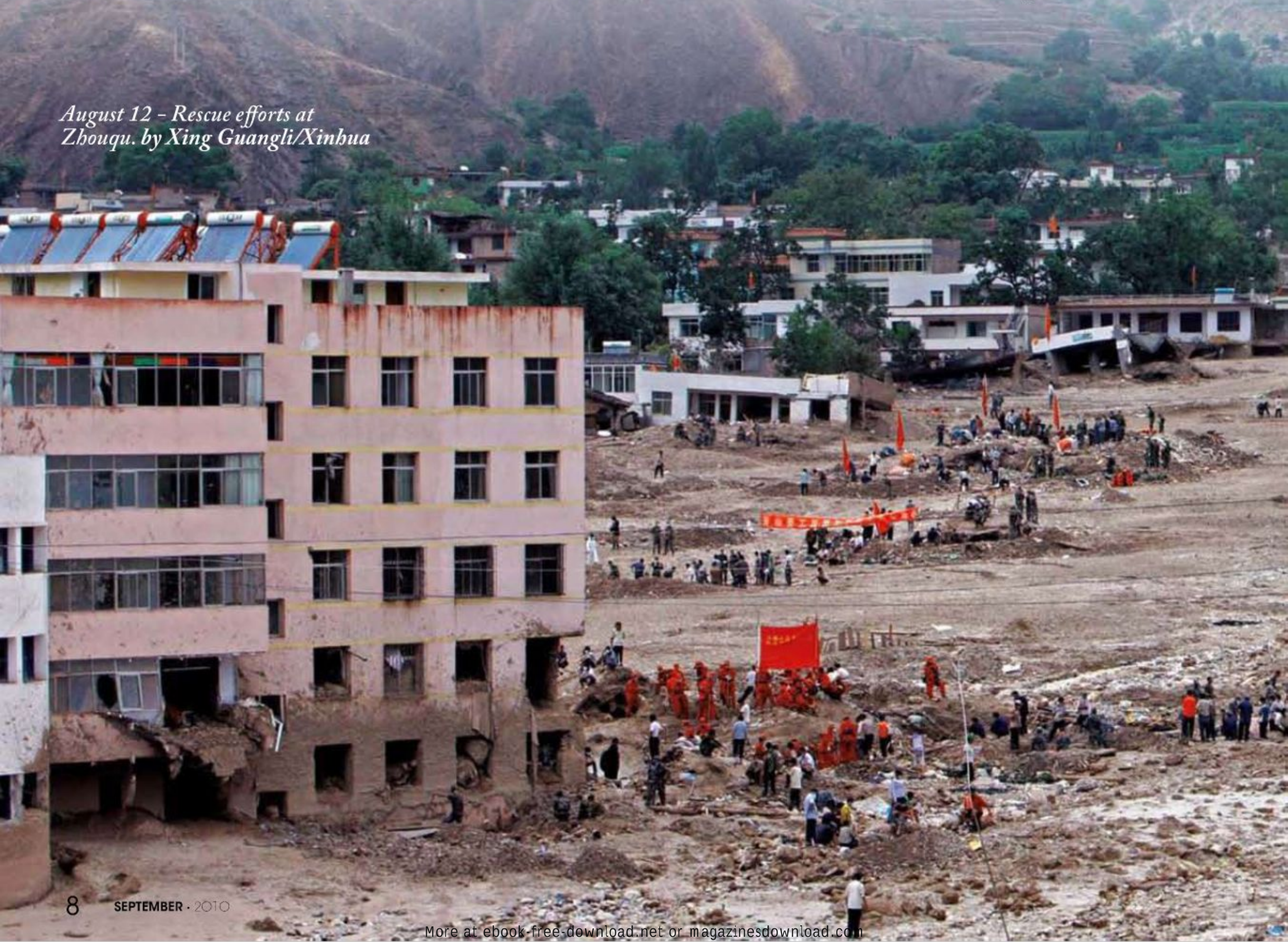


As of press time, 1,254 people have been confirmed dead and 490 missing after rainstorm-triggered landslides hit northwest China's Zhouqu County, Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province, on August 7.

"Torrential rains began to fall at around 10 p.m., followed by landslides and then the power of the county was cut," said the head of the county. "Water from the Bailong River then flooded the county seat leaving people trapped. The sludge became the biggest problem hampering rescue operations. It's too thick to walk or drive through."

Water from the reservoir began to flow downstream

August 12 – Rescue efforts at Zhouqu. by Xing Guangli/Xinhua



after an initial explosion, and a total of 19,000 people living in Shawan and Lianghekou townships were evacuated. According to local authorities, at least 50,000 residents in the county seat and nearby regions were believed to be affected as floods submerged half of the county and many houses were buried by landslides.

On August 15, a national mourning ceremony was held for mudslide victims. Amidst sirens and blaring horns, people across China stood in remembrance of victims of the massive mudslide in the remote northwestern town.

Chinese leaders, students, workers and general public paused for three minutes of silence at 10 a.m., a week after the devastating mudslide. Zhouqu is braced for the possibility of more rain, and thousands of troops used large excavators to remove the silt and debris blocking the county roads. Life gradually recovered as the relief operation continued.

The county education department said on August 14 that primary and middle schools in Zhouqu would postpone the autumn semester until August 25, 10 days later than scheduled. This was because hundreds of homes and one primary school were buried and more schools damaged or flooded. Many classrooms were being used as temporary shelters.

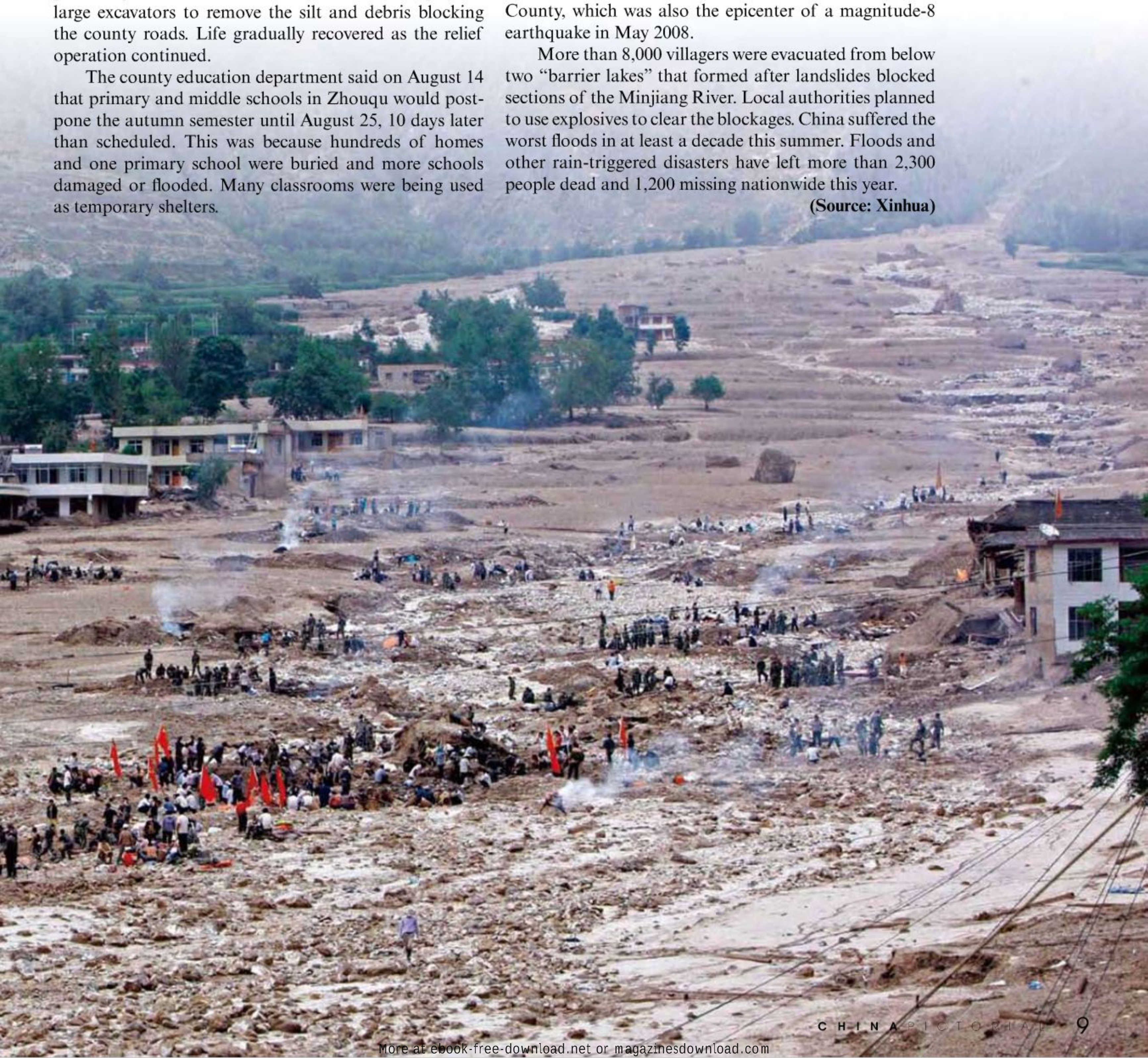
By noon of August 15, power had returned to 8,375 homes, 76 percent of all homes affected by the blackout. Vegetables were on sale the same day for the first time since the disaster. Local authorities ordered 8,400 kilogram of produce from neighboring Longnan City to be sold at the same or lower prices than before.

However, new floods and landslides triggered by torrential rains had also brought misery to Longnan and neighboring Sichuan Province. In Longnan, at least 34 people are dead and 63 missing, reported Huang Zeyuan, deputy Party chief of Longnan, at a news conference. "The situation is grim as rainstorms will likely trigger further geological disasters, such as landslides. We are still in dire need of relief supplies," he said.

In Sichuan, 31 people were missing in Wenchuan County, which was also the epicenter of a magnitude-8 earthquake in May 2008.

More than 8,000 villagers were evacuated from below two "barrier lakes" that formed after landslides blocked sections of the Minjiang River. Local authorities planned to use explosives to clear the blockages. China suffered the worst floods in at least a decade this summer. Floods and other rain-triggered disasters have left more than 2,300 people dead and 1,200 missing nationwide this year.

(Source: Xinhua)



*August 16 – Workers carry packs of textbooks to a classroom at Chengwai Primary School, Zhouqu. The Gansu Xinhua Bookstore Group Company has donated 339,000 textbooks to 32,000 pupils and high school students ahead of the new semester. by **Liang Qiang/Xinhua***

*August 16 – Residents are ferried by boat. by **Nie Jianjiang/Xinhua***

*August 14 – A relief worker sprinkles disinfectant. by **Tao Ming/Xinhua***

*August 10 – Mourning for lost loved ones. by **Xing Guangli/Xinhua***

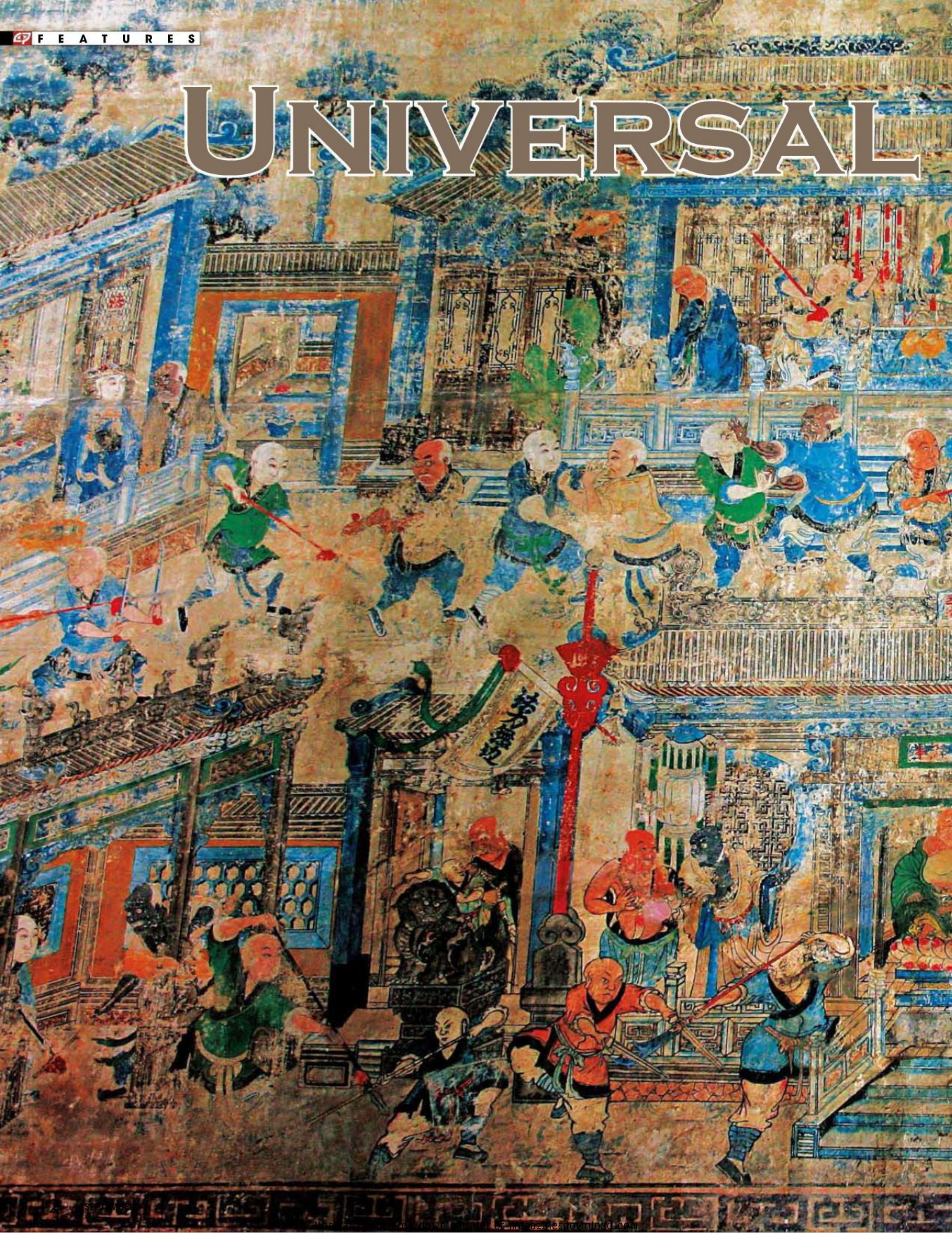
August 12 – Rescue efforts. by Tao Ming/Xinhua

August 12 – A rescue worker leaps over rushing water. ***by Liu Xiao/Xinhua***

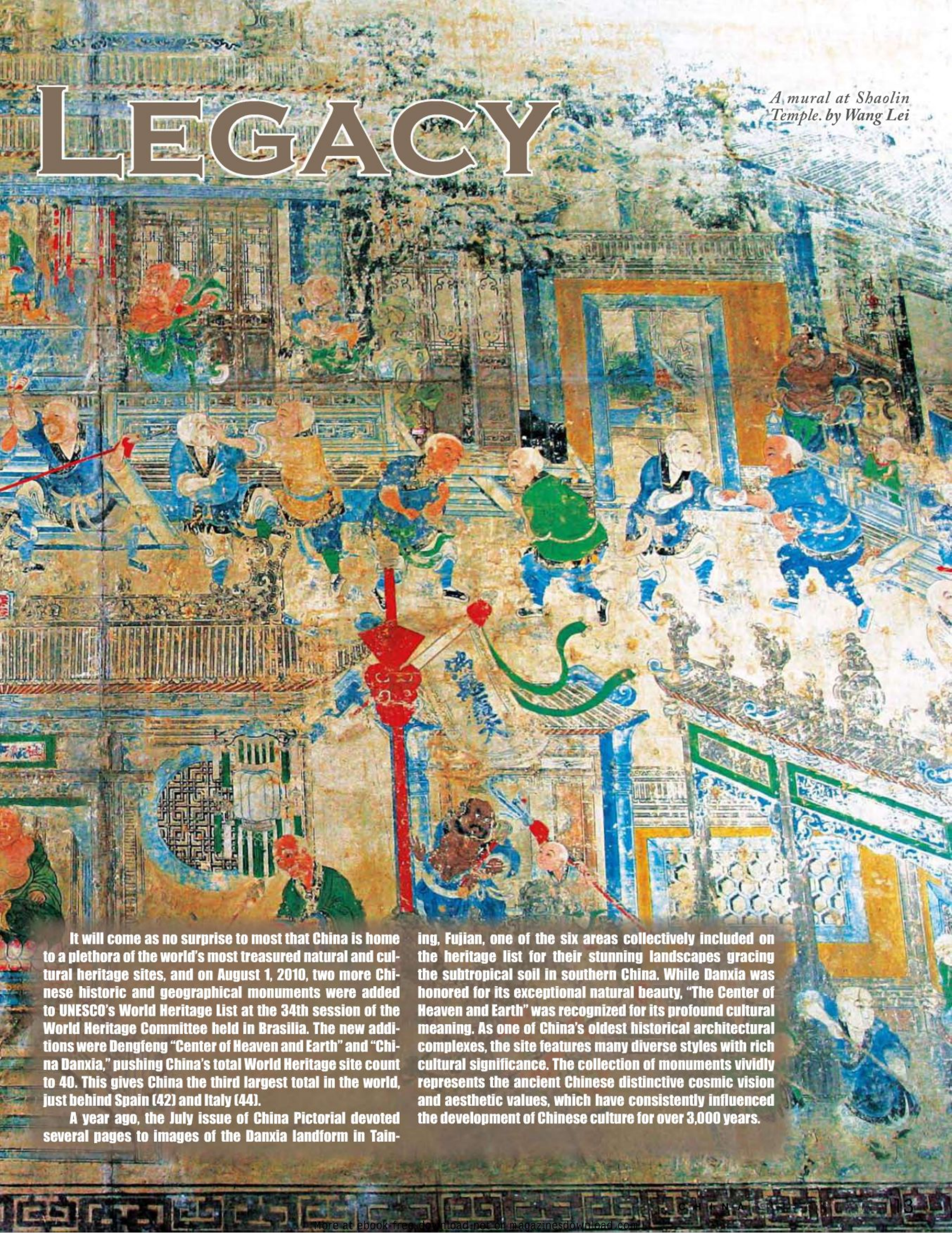
August 16 - Two girls play as they sell vegetables. Three temporary sites were used to collect vegetables in Zhouqu so local residents would have enough food. ***by Guo Gang/Xinhua***

August 15 - A boy lights a candle during a mourning ceremony in Changchun, capital of Jilin Province, to grieve for the victims of the Zhouqu mudslide disaster. ***by Li Hong/Xinhua***

UNIVERSAL



LEGACY



A mural at Shaolin Temple. by Wang Lei

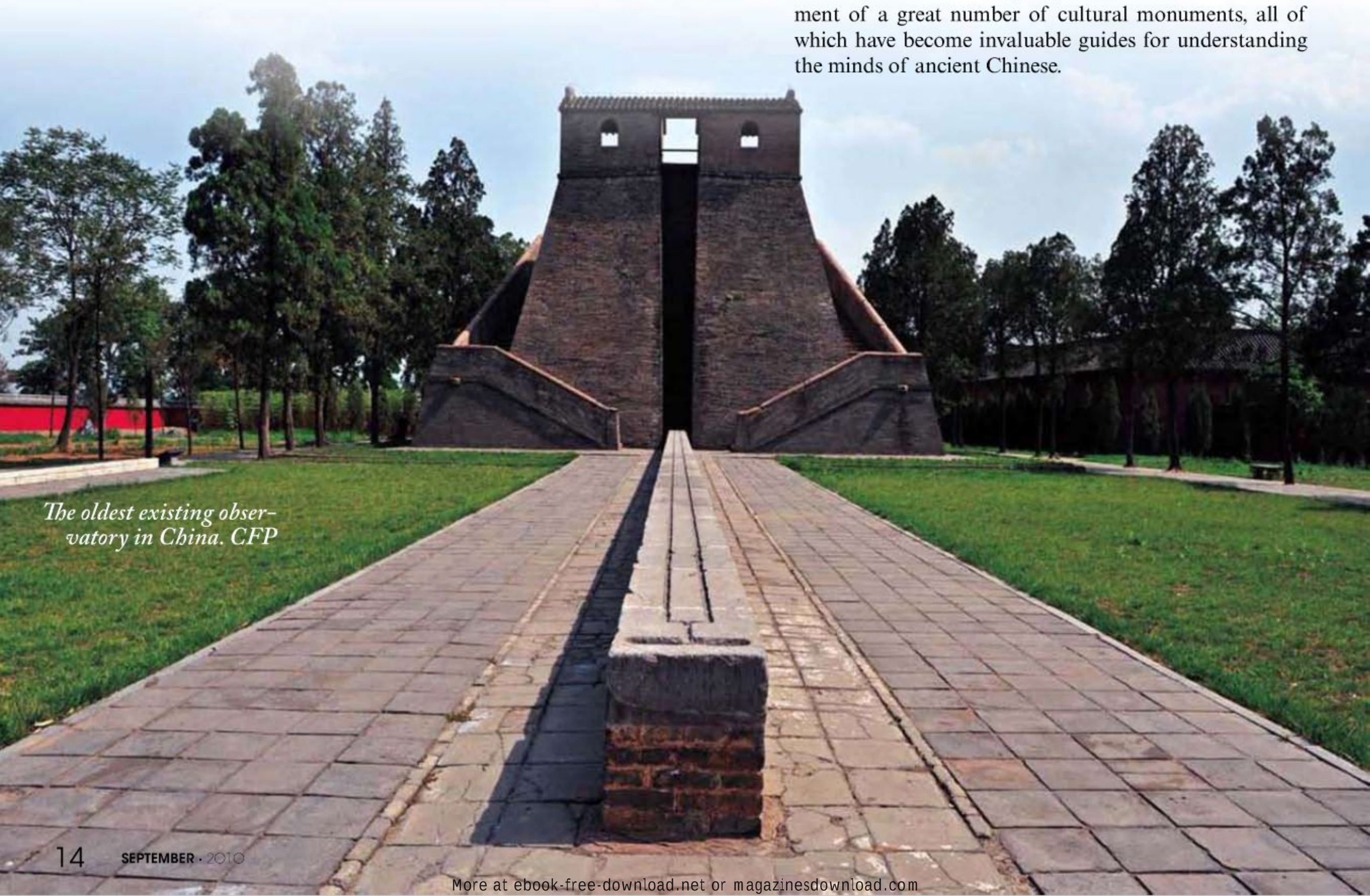
It will come as no surprise to most that China is home to a plethora of the world's most treasured natural and cultural heritage sites, and on August 1, 2010, two more Chinese historic and geographical monuments were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List at the 34th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Brasilia. The new additions were Dengfeng "Center of Heaven and Earth" and "China Danxia," pushing China's total World Heritage site count to 40. This gives China the third largest total in the world, just behind Spain (42) and Italy (44).

A year ago, the July issue of China Pictorial devoted several pages to images of the Danxia landform in Taining, Fujian, one of the six areas collectively included on the heritage list for their stunning landscapes gracing the subtropical soil in southern China. While Danxia was honored for its exceptional natural beauty, "The Center of Heaven and Earth" was recognized for its profound cultural meaning. As one of China's oldest historical architectural complexes, the site features many diverse styles with rich cultural significance. The collection of monuments vividly represents the ancient Chinese distinctive cosmic vision and aesthetic values, which have consistently influenced the development of Chinese culture for over 3,000 years.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

Text by Lu Jia

The beliefs of ancient Chinese held that China was the 'middle kingdom' between heaven and earth, and located at the center of this intermediary realm was Dengfeng. Because of its unique cosmological significance, Dengfeng, in today's Henan Province, became the place where China's early dynasties established their capitals and one of the first cradles of Chinese civilization. Ancient Chinese astronomy adherents, as well as the followers of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, all visited Dengfeng to worship at its holy mountain, making it also a hub of cultural exchange. This intermingling contributed to the development of a great number of cultural monuments, all of which have become invaluable guides for understanding the minds of ancient Chinese.



The oldest existing observatory in China. CFP

A beautiful stone engraving found at a watchtower dating to the Han Dynasty (206B. C.-A.D.220). CFP

Sundial, prevalent in ancient China. Xinhua

"Different cultural beliefs have left a vast treasure, bequeathing fascinating buildings," says Yang Huancheng, a renowned expert on ancient architecture. "The different styles reflect features of the ritual system, as well as the religious, scientific and educational beliefs of that time. Architecture extends across different periods, combining to showcase a vivid history stretching over 2,000 years."

Juliet Ramsay, an Australian expert on cultural heritage, evaluated the architectural complex that has been billed "The Center of Heaven and Earth." She learned the Chinese character "zhong" during her three-day investigation, since it appeared repeatedly at sites such as Shaolin Temple, Dengfeng Observatory, Zhongyue Temple and Songyang Academy. 'Zhong' means middle, and demonstrates the ancient belief regarding China's, and specifically Dengfeng's, position within the cosmos.

Dengfeng Observatory

Among the historic monuments in Dengfeng, the observatory occupies an important place in the global history of science and architecture. In order to guarantee better crop yields and feed a large population, astronomy developed very early in China. Some astronomers attempted to improve solar measuring instruments in order to better predict the sun's behavior. Their results can be seen in the construction of Dengfeng Observatory. Built in Guyang City between 1276 and 1279, it is the oldest of its kind still standing in China.

According to historical records, at the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty (about 1037 B.C.), Chou Kung wanted to move the dynastic capital to Luoyang, but was met with strong opposition. He therefore attempted to provide astronomical evidence to justify the move, trying to prove that Luoyang was actually the "center of earth" by measuring shadows. Wherever it measured 1 *chi* and 5 *cun* on the sundial at noon on the summer solstice would be the most suitable location for a capital. After the measurements, he found it in Gaocheng County in Dengfeng, thus creating the theory of the "center of heaven and earth," which no one questioned for the following 1,000 years. It was here that the astronomer Guo Shoujing would create his famous calendar in 1280, which has a time difference of only 26 seconds to the Gregorian calendar that appeared some 300 years later.

The theory of the "center of heaven and earth" conferred special status on Mount Songshan. The emperors of ancient China resided nearby to display their divine right to rule. It served other functions too, and from the time of King Wu of Zhou to the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), 72 emperors paid hunting visits, offered sacrifices, or staged rituals there.

Songyang Academy

Songyang Academy passes on vital clues as to the education system of that time, as well as aspects of Confucian culture, thanks to its unique architectural style.

Situated at the foot of the southern Junji Peak, Songyang Academy is one of the oldest ancient academies with enormous influence in China. First built in 484, it has undergone repeated renovations.

It is a fine example of northern Chinese academic architecture and perfectly demonstrates Confucian ideals. Its most important structure features a lecture room along with an ancestral temple in the front and auxiliary buildings at the back. This layout symbolizes the three important tasks of Confucianism: Giving lectures, collecting books and offering sacrifices. The whole architectural complex is influenced by the 'three cardinal guides' and 'five constant virtues,' displaying the ancient code and passing on the mysteries of Confucian hierarchy.

A number of famous Confucians of the Song Dynasty, including Sima Guang, Fan Zhongyan, Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao, gave lectures here and it became one of the four famous academies of the age. It continues to attract scholars today, and maintains its reputation.

"Songyang Academy played an important part in the development of Confucianism," explains Zhang Jiatai, an expert on ancient architecture. "It records the history of academic education and is an important carrier of ancient culture and beliefs."

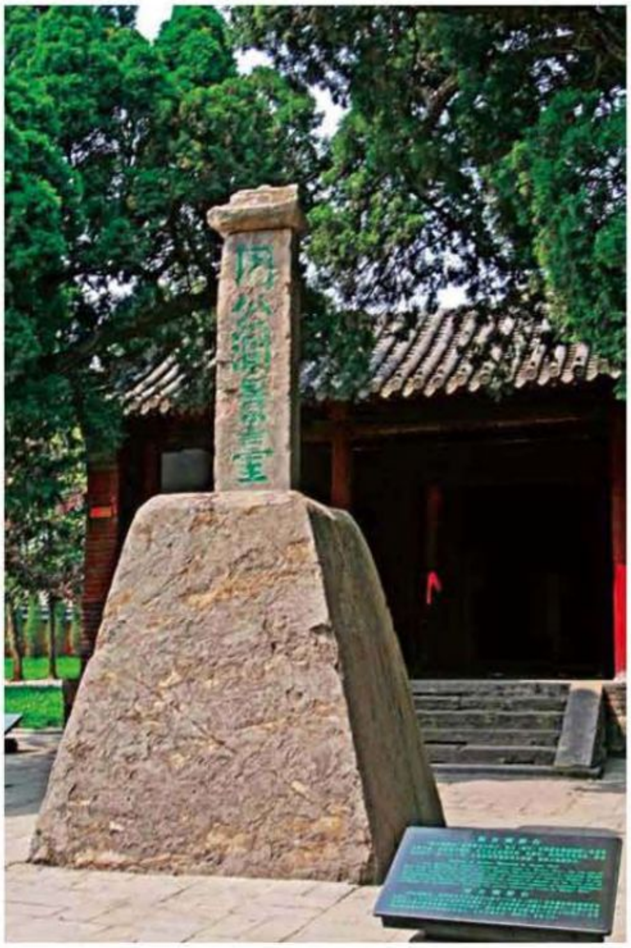
To continue its legacy, Songyang Academy has carefully restored some of its buildings, such as the examination hall, making efforts to preserve the existing architectural patterns of the Qing Dynasty. It has become an important tourist attraction where people can learn the intricacies of the Confucian education system.

Zhongyue Temple

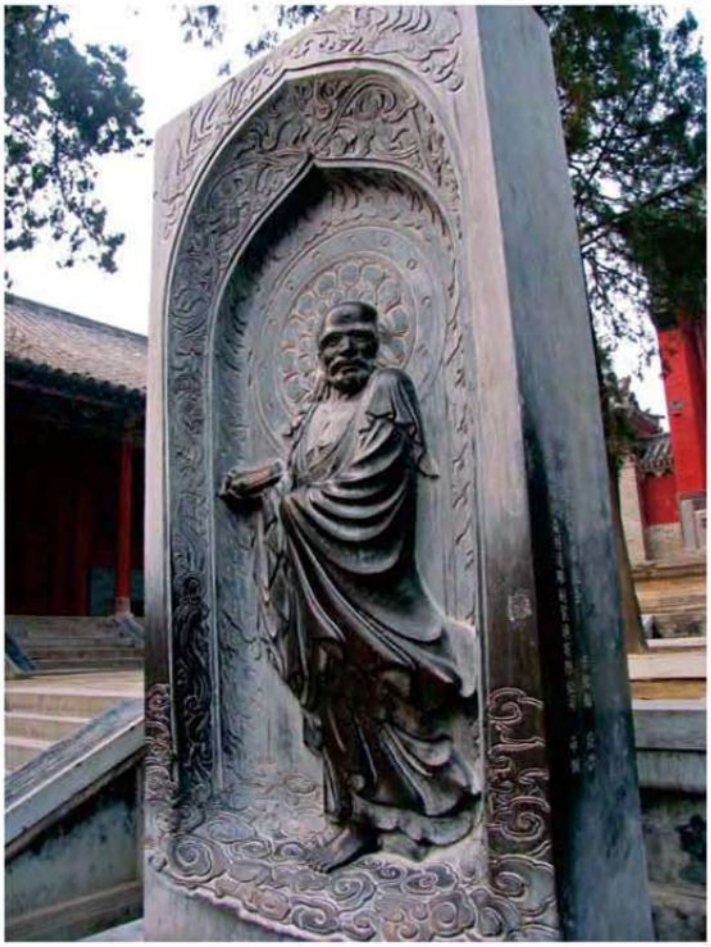
Taishi Ancestral Temple, the predecessor of Zhongyue Temple, was first built in the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) as a place to offer sacrifices to the god of the mountain. In 110 B.C., Emperor Wudi of the Western Han Dynasty paid a visit to Mount Songshan. As he climbed what was then called Mount Taishi, his followers thought they could hear a voice chanting "long life." Emperors had long valued longevity, and Wudi believed the sound to be a miracle, ordering the official in charge of sacrifices to build Taishi Ancestral Temple and prohibit any logging activity on this sacred mountain. He also endowed the peak with a new name "Zhongyue", or Central Mountain of the Five Sacred Mountains. In the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), the ancestral temple was named Zhongyue Temple and occupied by Taoists. Emperors throughout the ages greatly revered this temple and often renovated it in the style of their palaces. Currently, there are more than 400 buildings in the architectural complex, including palaces, pavilions, porches and stone tablets.

Zhongyue Temple is not only the place to offer sacrifices to the god of the mountain, but also an important showcase for Taoist architecture. It is said that the founder of Taoism, Zhang Daoling, practiced his beliefs on the slopes of Mount Songshan for nine years. Subsequently, many famous Taoists have held ceremonies there. The Siyue Temples, comprising Dongyue Temple, Nanyue Temple, Xiyue Temple and Beiyue Temple, are located around Junji Gate in a clockwise formation. Ancient people called Zhongyue Temple the palace of the god of earth. Since earth was the most revered among the five primary elements (metal, wood, water, fire and earth), they also regarded Zhongyue as the head of the five famous mountains. The five temples stand for the religious idea that "five mountains coexist and the five primary elements form integrity."

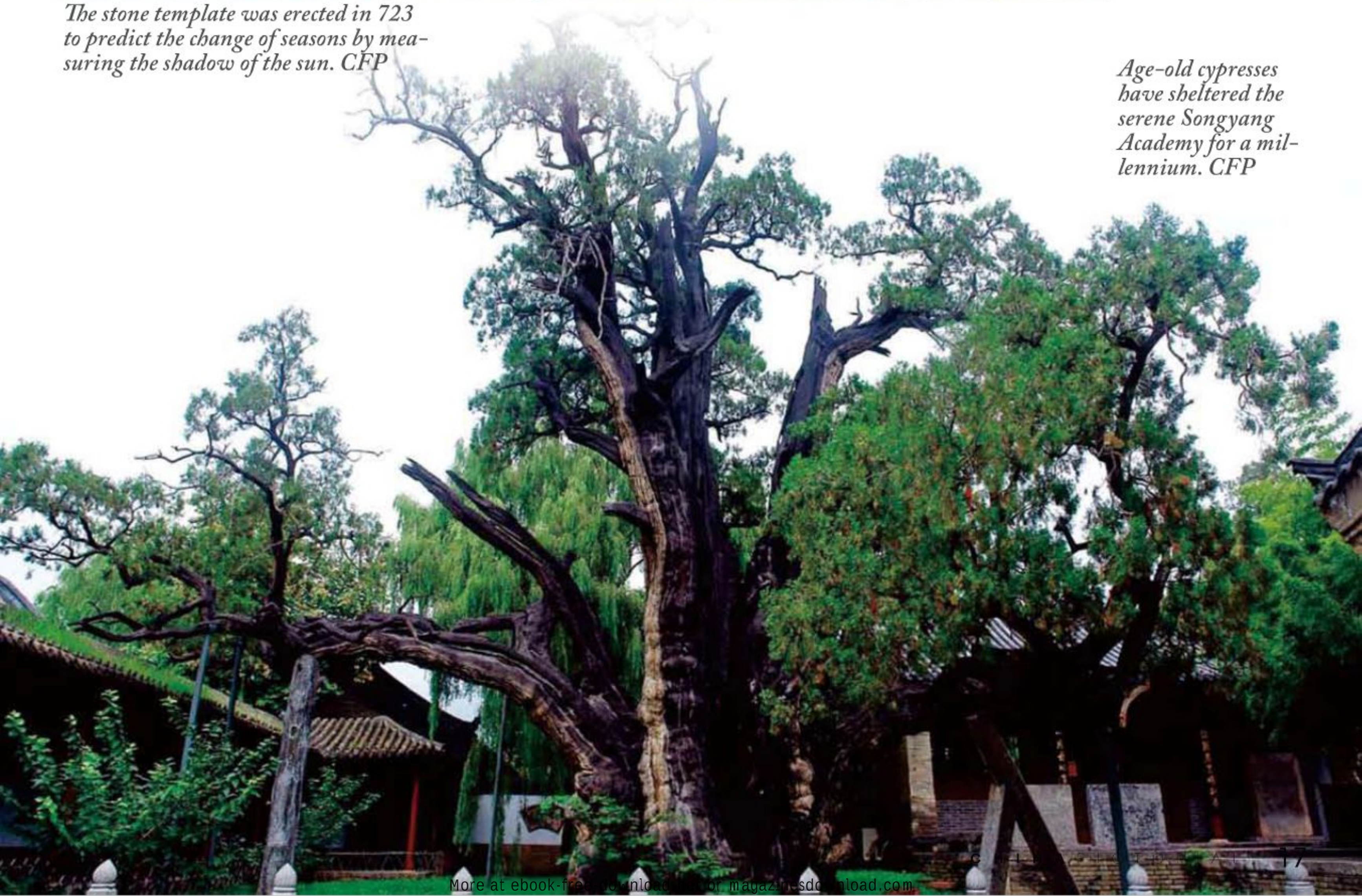
Zhongyue Temple on Mount Songshan is China's largest existing mountain site for sacrificial rites. Xinhua



The stone template was erected in 723 to predict the change of seasons by measuring the shadow of the sun. CFP



A relief stele at Shaolin Temple. CFP



Age-old cypresses have sheltered the serene Songyang Academy for a millennium. CFP

Shaolin Temple is not just a sacred place for martial arts, but also the cradle of the Zen sect of Chinese Buddhism. Xinhua

Shaolin Temple

The architectural complex of Shaolin Temple includes Chuzu Temple and the pagoda forest. Shaolin Temple is named for its location within a dense forest (*lin*) beside Mount Shaoshi (*shao*) to the west of the Songshan Mountain range. Established in 495, Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei designed the temple to accommodate the Indian Buddhist master Batuo. Some time after, another Indian sage called Bodhidharma came to Shaolin where he began to develop Zen Buddhism.

Of course, the temple complex is also famous for cultivating Shaolin Kung Fu, the biggest school in Han martial arts boasting more than 700 skills. Zen Buddhism was a discipline aimed at helping a person find his true self and progress towards ultimate enlightenment. Kung Fu was actually designed to complement this process, focusing on eliminating afflictions through physical discipline, and helping improve overall health. This spiritual element distinguishes it from other martial arts.

In recent years, Shaolin Temple has introduced a series of reforms to improve its martial arts, with Shaolin Kung Fu undergoing careful research and classification. Modern developments are best embodied by the world famous Shaolin Monk Team, which gives performances around the globe. One of their newly created routines is entitled "Maxim," and features 16 monks mimicking the strength and spirit of animals such as the tiger and the

A camera operates around the clock to monitor and ensure protection of the cultural relics at Songyang Academy. Xinhua snake in order to illustrate the intertwined relationship between humans and other creatures. The performance is wordless, set to music and choreographed lighting. The abbot Shi Yongxin explains that, "Different nations have their own ways to represent the tenets of Zen Buddhism. We interpret them using modern elements, and this is the essence of the Buddhist saying 'all rivers run into sea.'"

Buddhism originated in India, but Zen Buddhism is mostly a Chinese cultural product. It became one of the most influential Buddhist sects and still enjoys immense popularity worldwide thanks to the simplicity of its teachings. Compared with other Buddhist sects, which have become rigid in the process of spreading and emphasize studying words instead of cultivating spirit, Zen advocates learning "not by written words" and stresses "seeing your heart directly."

The rich variety and cultural connotations of the historic monuments of "The Center of Heaven and Earth" are a true treasure trove. As the representatives of ancient Chinese ritual, religious, scientific and academic architecture, the complex is a record of the construction technology and art of ancient China which embodies the unique cosmic viewpoint and aesthetic standards of ancient people. It offers a tantalizing glimpse of traditional thinking, and presents the richness and complexity of the Chinese cultural legacy.

Shaolin Kung Fu dazzles the eyes. CFP

Info

Since its debut on April 26, 2007, Shaolin Zen Music Ritual has been staged nearly 800 times at a theater near Shaolin Temple on Mount Songshan for close to a million visitors. As China's largest current outdoor live performance, the music ritual involves some of the world's grandest lighting and stereo systems as well as nearly 600 performers. Accompanied by the tunes composed by noted musician Tan Dun, the ritual features an integration of Shaolin Kung Fu and folk mythologies, which provides viewers with an insight into profound Zen culture and fascinating Chinese martial arts.

For details: www.czslyydd.com

Pagoda Forest, one of the most popular scenic spots at Shaolin Temple. Xinhua

DEBATING HERITAGE FRENZY

Text by Tan Xingyu

A grand ceremony is held in Dengfeng to celebrate the addition of "The Center of Heaven and Earth" to the World Heritage List. CFP

China's recent success in adding two more sites to the UNESCO World Heritage List testifies to a global acknowledgement of the sites' cultural and natural value, and it is believed that increased funding from the World Heritage Foundation for such areas will ensure better protection of the sites. However, while local governments celebrate the good news, the growing World Heritage frenzy in China has provoked questions, with some contemplating possible downsides.

Price Hikes

Shortly after the announcement that "The Center of Heaven and Earth" was added to the World Heritage List, netizens began debating whether or not ticket prices for Shaolin Temple would rise. Shi Yongxin, abbot of Shaolin Temple, swiftly replied that ticket prices would remain the same. The Municipal Government of Dengfeng, where the World Heritage site is located, asserted that not only was a price hike out of the question, but also that they were developing a program allowing tourists to visit for free from October to December of this year.

The responses temporarily satisfied the public's concerns. In recent years, price hikes became the norm for many Chinese scenic areas after their addition to the World Heritage List, including Wulingyuan Scenic Area, Mount Huangshan, Jiuzhaigou Valley, and the ancient villages of Xidi and Hongcun. Lately, prices at resorts around Danxia landform have risen noticeably. In a media interview, Hou Rongfeng, deputy director of Guangdong Danxia Mountain Administration, defended the trend, noting, "The current ticket price for Danxia Mountain is 100 yuan on weekdays and 120 yuan on holidays and weekends, compared to an average of 160 yuan for other geoparks in China. In fact, admission at many World Heritage sites, including Mount Huangshan and Jiuzhaigou Valley, has topped 200 yuan." He suggests that Danxia is amongst the more affordable sites, with plentiful room for adjustment.

Peng Hua, a professor at the School of Geography and Planning of Sun Yat-sen University and leader of China's world heritage declaration expert group, views the phenomenon from a different angle. "The practice of connecting ticket prices with heritage status distorts the meaning of heritage application," he explains. In some cities, the momentum for heritage application is derived from an already increased demand for tourism development, but a tourism industry boom has little to do with ticket prices, which only account for a small proportion of tourism consumption. "Heritage application should be an effort to enhance protection," Peng continues. "It's a commitment that means increased responsibility to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. This factor must be clear to local governments when submitting applications." Peng adds that in some more economically developed areas, admission to World Heritage sites has been cut to only a small nominal fee, or even completely free. Conservation and management funds come directly from the local government, which stimulates even greater tourism service consumption.

Still, Professor Peng concedes that price hikes are reasonable to some extent. "This is largely due to the administrative mechanism of China's scenic areas," he remarks. "China's scenic areas and heritage sites are administered by local governments. Although a big proportion of conservation expenses comes from tourism revenue, successful applications cause greater administrative demands, which usually require more funds. Also, list inclusion usually results in surges of tourist flow, so for the sake of heritage protection, regulating the number of visitors through price leverage – especially during holidays – is an acceptable management strategy."

Shaolin Temple often hosts Zen forums and other various cultural activities. CFP

Astronomical Expenses

Another point of discussion is the considerable investment involved in the heritage application process. Media reports showed that during the nine years of preparation for Dengfeng's "Center of Heaven and Earth" application, more than 800 million yuan were spent, and the total investment in six areas of "China Danxia" was estimated at more than a billion yuan. Some critics argue that such monumental investments in heritage application aren't worth the price tag.

"This is a misconception," asserts Peng, explaining that application expenses usually fall into three categories. The first is the building of infrastructure such as road expansion, sanitation facilities, and moving telephone, television, and electricity wiring underground. Secondly, funds are spent on supporting facilities such as museums, tourist service centers, management offices, and monitoring stations for water, air, geologic events, and forest fires. Finally, money is required to ensure comprehensive environmental control of the scenic area. Planners must remove structures that diminish appeal of scenic areas, resettle villages that may hinder development of the core scenic area, and renovate outdated facilities. "People tend to focus on minor things, such as sightseeing paths, guide systems, and public activities," Peng illustrates, "but these things are only a tiny fraction of the total cost. Most infrastructural investments actually make up for a past lack of basic development. It's unfair to include such costs as part of heritage application."

Ultimately, Peng believes that the tremendous expenses involved in heritage applications are worthwhile. He asserts that for properties that can barely meet UNESCO's criteria, extra spending is inevitable, and yet money invested in such projects associated with the application carries great developmental potential. Problems that historically hindered an area's tourism development have been solved during the process, and a huge proportion of the investment supports projects that will promote regional social and economic growth. "It is clear that in the last few years dramatic changes have occurred not only at the scenic sites, but also in peripheral areas," Peng continues optimistically, "which lays a solid foundation for future development."

Past experience suggests that after scenic areas are included on the World Heritage List, the resulting tourism boom contributes to accelerated GDP growth, which certainly pleases local governments. After successful application, a heritage site immediately becomes a destination recommended by UNESCO and the UN World Tourism Organization. According to He Yun'ao, director of Nanjing University's Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, successful application testifies to sound environmental protection conditions, service quality, and security at the site, which stimulate the development of local tourism. For example, the ticket revenue of the Ancient City of Pingyao was 1.25 million yuan in 1997, when it was designated as a World Heritage Site, and by 2008, the figure topped 75 million yuan. Its overall tourism income soared from 12.5 million yuan in 1997, only 0.96 percent of its GDP, to 670 million yuan in 2008, accounting for 13.91 percent of the area's GDP. Inclusion on the World Heritage List has enabled leapfrog development of some local economies. These inspiring past cases no doubt fuel heritage fever nationwide.

Of course, excessive spending in preparation for the application can rarely avoid public criticism. Some experts argue that the economic benefits of inclusion on the World Heritage List are overvalued. The huge preliminary costs cause tremendous financial pressure on local governments, which is no doubt a major factor in increasing ticket prices at scenic areas.

A press officer of the World Heritage Committee stressed that national and local authorities should find balance between funding management of World Heritage sites and preserving the unique treasures for future generations while making them accessible to the public, because "World Heritage belongs to all of us. It should be shared by humanity, just like water and air."

Shaolin Temple sees an unceasing flow of tourists in all seasons. Xinhua

Shenzhen International Trade Building, then the tallest structure in China, was completed in 1984. by Jiang Shigao, courtesy of Photo Service of Shenzhen Press Group

A Quick 30 Years

Text by Zhao Yue

What can be achieved in three decades? For a person, 30 years brings a world of maturity and responsibility. For a civilization, 30 years is the blink of an eye. But for an individual city, 30 years of change can mean the difference between night and day. "The iron curtain is raised," stated *The New York Times* with careful wording on August 27, 1980, reporting on the birth of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) with a cautiously optimistic tone. The day before, *Regulations on Special Economic Zones in Guangdong Province* was passed by the Chinese government, opening Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen as the first SEZs after decades of isolation from the world outside. Over the subsequent 30 years, Shenzhen has gradually become a world-class metropolis.

Starting with a Mission

Thirty years ago, Shenzhen wasn't more than a small fishing village in Bao'an County, Guangdong Province, adjacent to Hong Kong. The birth of Shenzhen SEZ began with Wu Nansheng, then the Guangdong Provincial Party secretary. When Wu returned for a visit to his hometown of Shantou in 1979, he was shocked to find it in disarray – full of dilapidated buildings, roadside bamboo sheds, poor infrastructure, bad telephone service, and frequent power cuts.

Wu wondered if there was a quick fix to shake off poverty. "Have you ever thought of opening an export processing zone like those in Taiwan or a free port?" asked one of Wu's friends from Singapore. "If you establish something like that, the area will get a quick influx of funds." The idea was discussed within the Guangdong Provincial Government, and the concept became "putting Guangdong a step ahead." In 1979, Guangdong suggested to the central government that some of their areas implement special policies to attract foreign investment.

"These places can be called Special Economic Zones," announced the late Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, in support of the idea. "The central government cannot give you financial support. You need to blaze your own trail."

And with that, the iron curtain was raised. Since the inception of the SEZ, Shenzhen has been branded a focal point of the "economic revolution."

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The erection of Shun Hing Square in 1995 made it then the tallest skyscraper in Asia. by He Yanguang, courtesy of Shenzhen Professional Photography Association

Freeing Minds Exploring a Market Economy

The first two waves to arrive in Shenzhen were bold pioneers coming from throughout China's mainland, and Hong Kong businessmen from just across the river.

For those from the rest of the mainland, Shenzhen's opening policy was more attractive than simple economic opportunity. Free minds became the priority. "Back then, Shenzhen was the only place on the mainland to break the bonds of a planned economy and free itself from the old system," explains Yu Changjiang, sociology professor with Peking University's Shenzhen Graduate School. "It refused to follow old rules and welcomed innovation. Even in the years to come, other cities in China would view Shenzhen differently."

"The city was largely desolate back then," remarks Chen Hong in his book, *Folk Observation on Shenzhen's Major Decisions and Events from 1979-2000*. The newly-established SEZ provided a new way of life and the possibility of freedom from institutional constraints, which explains why the city attracted so many talented professionals to abandon secure employment elsewhere.

In 1979, Shenzhen passed the *Real Estate Compensation Trade Law*, which provided land and workshops for foreign businessmen investing in facilities in Shenzhen, with profits split between the two parties.

Several days after the news reached Hong Kong, the first group of Hong Kong investors came to Shenzhen.

Migrant workers in Shenzhen in the 1980s. by Liu Tingfang

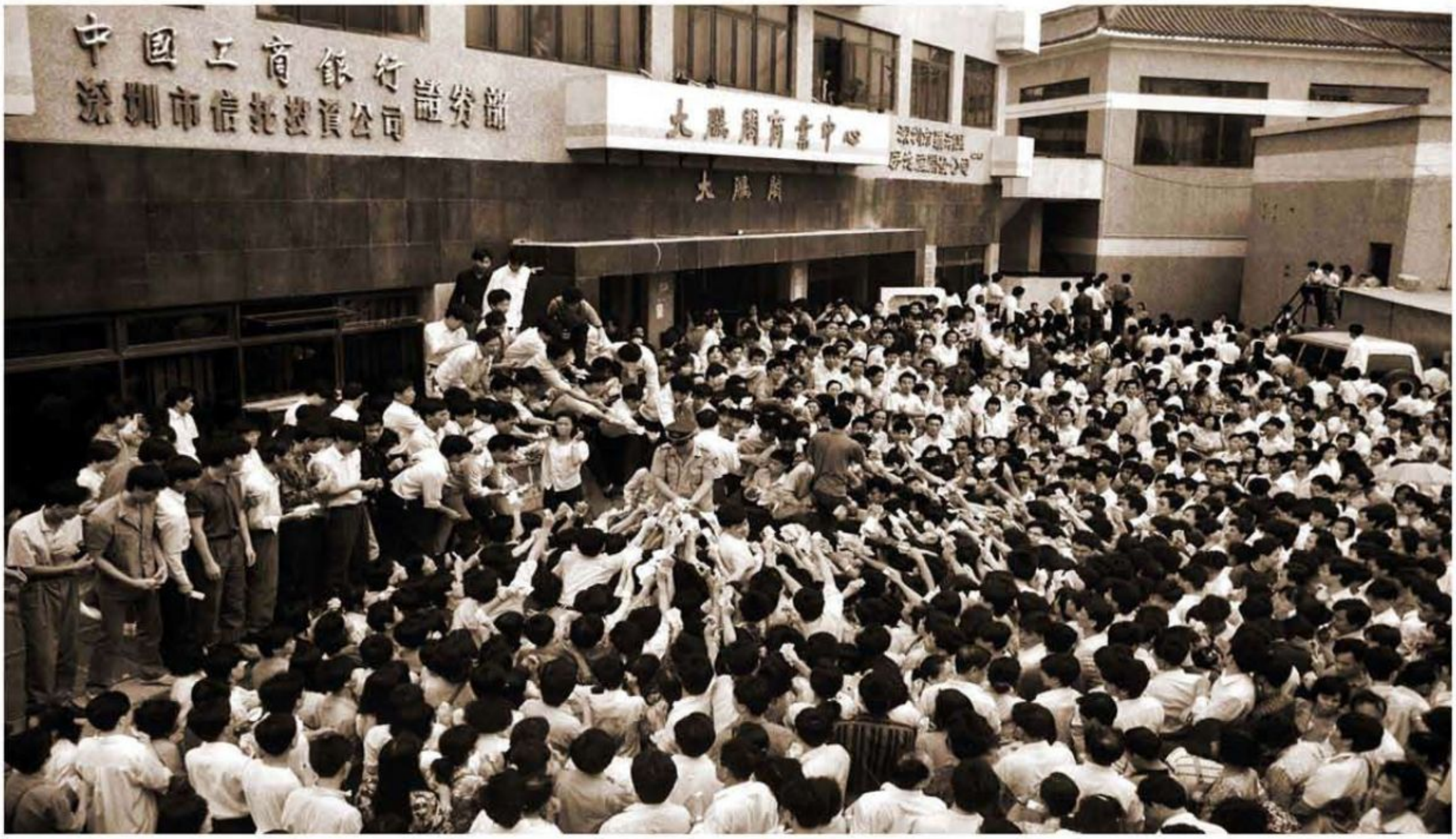
時間就是金錢
效率就是生命

"Time is Money, Efficiency is Life!" With the development of China's reform, this slogan became popular throughout the country. ***Courtesy of Shenzhen Museum***

After crossing the Luohu Bridge, they were welcomed by rural scenery without a bus or taxi in sight, a landscape not idyllic for these driven businessmen. Some managed to procure bicycles, and pedaled down a muddy road towards the temporary office of the Shenzhen Municipal Government. At night, they slept on tables in the government building because they couldn't find a decent hotel. When questioned about this rush, a gentleman replied, "Hong Kong was only a small fishing village several decades ago. Now, Mr. Deng Xiaoping made Shenzhen a SEZ, which is a rare opportunity. I want to invest here."

Shenzhen's rapid industrial development created a wealth of new opportunities and even more dreams of riches. The city became synonymous with gold. It became the capital of making big money, and the city embraced everyone from different geographical, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Beginning in 1989, numerous migrant workers already residing in Shenzhen inspired millions more from across China to relocate to various cities in the South. *Time* magazine even dubbed this the largest population movement of all time. According to *Southern Metropolis Daily*, during the first quarter of 1992 alone, over 1.4 million money orders totaling 703 million yuan were mailed from Shenzhen to other parts of China. Migrant workers sending money home became a major source of income for the rest of the country, injecting new wealth into every corner of China.

Free karaoke at Sihai Park, Shekou, on January 1, 1994. by Zhang Xinmin, courtesy of Shenzhen Professional Photography Association



People flooded Shenzhen to purchase stock subscription certificates in August 1992. by Lan Shuitian

Creating Creation

A turning point in the short history of Shenzhen happened in 1988. Many of the city's leading enterprises were formed that year, such as Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd., ZTE Corporation, China Merchants Bank, and Ping An Insurance Company. Experts attribute the sudden genesis of so many economic giants to policies enacted the year before. In 1987, new regulations encouraged technicians to found technological enterprises by appraising technology as capital stock.

"During its transformation to a city of cutting-edge technology, Shenzhen provided a great many opportunities for entrepreneurs to start a business," remarks Chen Hong. "Many young people scooped up their first bucket of gold in Shenzhen, but the new environment required them to mature, which is why quite a lot of Shenzhen's excellent entrepreneurs emerged during this period. Along with the city's rapid modernization, companies no longer just hired anyone off the street." He marks 1992 as the watershed year of the city's population structure. Before then, large-scale construction required huge numbers of low-end workers. After 1992, the city began focusing more on technology industries. With less demand for low-end labor, an extensive business mode was no longer suitable for Shenzhen.

Sun Zhenhua, head of Shenzhen Public Arts Center, believes that after 1992, Shenzhen was on track for genuinely rapid economic development. However, when the city broke from many institutional constraints, it also

Patrol officers from both Hong Kong and Shenzhen on Chung Ying Street, 1995. by Yu Haibo, courtesy of Shenzhen Professional Photography Association abandoned some elements of value. With so much focus on economic development, cultural preservation faced a major challenge.

Professor Yu Changjiang asserts that before 2002, Shenzhen was still in the process of breaking away from the constraints of a planned economy and injecting the vitality of a market economy. After 2001, Shenzhen showed signs of fatigue from years of rapid change, and had reached the turning point of a new era of creation.

A Long Way Ahead

In November 2002, an online article titled "Shenzhen, Who Abandoned You?" found its way to the desks of the city's decision makers. The 18,000-word article included sharp criticism of many of the city's most glar-

A coach service to Hong Kong is available 24 hours a day at Shenzhen's Huanggang Border since 2003. ***by Ding Qinglin, courtesy of Photo Service of Shenzhen Press Group***

Since it became a SEZ, Shenzhen has been developing at a breakneck speed. ***by Wan Quan***

After a busy day's work, Shenzhen residents relax on the beach. ***by Wan Quan***

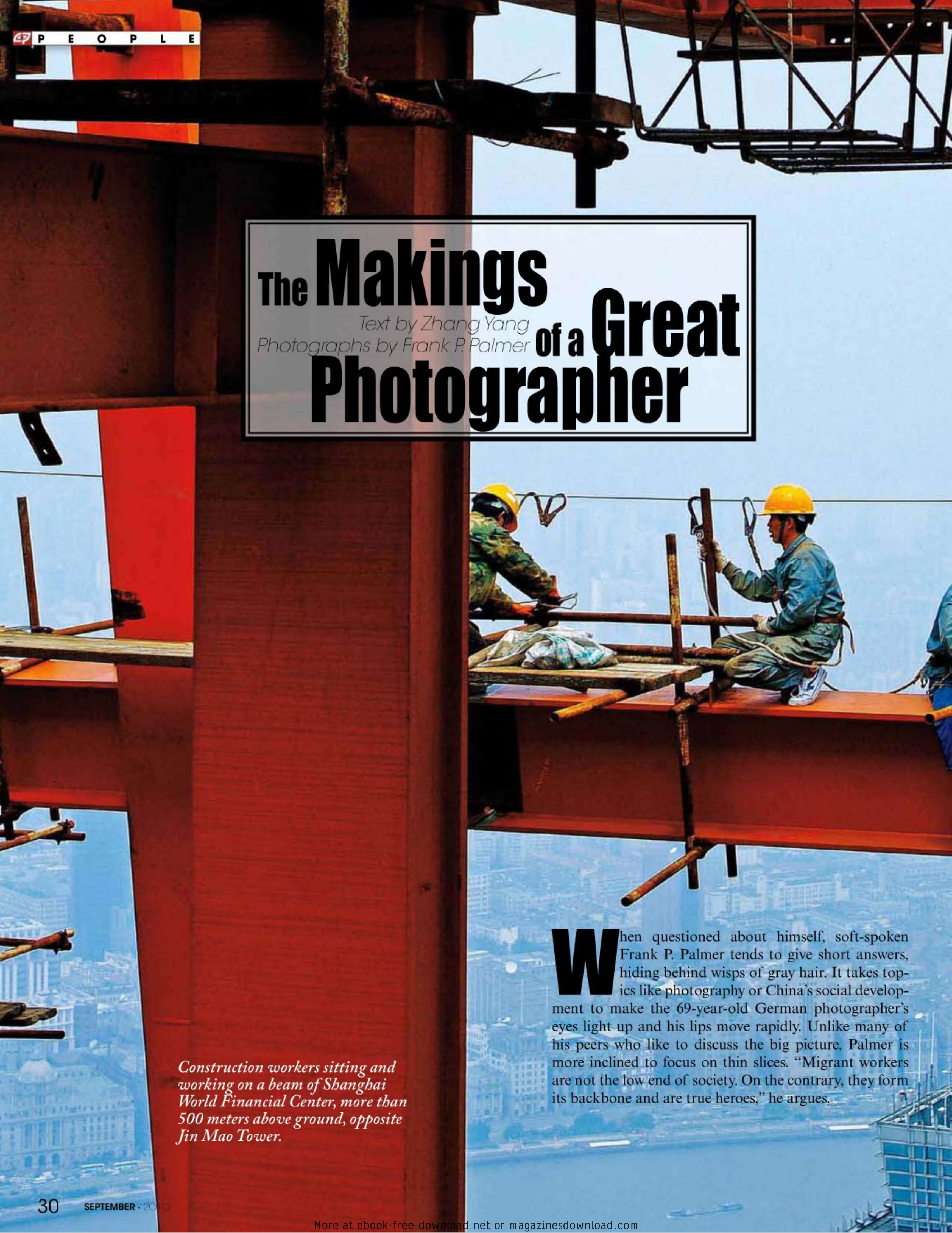
ing problems: Hi-tech industries were leaving along with high-end talent, preferential policies were less attractive, and the city had less influence over the country's economic decisions and suffered from inefficiency in the work of government bodies. Shenzhen needed new direction after 20 years of reform and opening up.

The city's innovators were soon blazing more new trails. In 2006, Shenzhen issued documents that placed emphasis on independent innovation, proclaiming the city's aim to transform itself into the nation's cutting edge. In 2008 and 2009, Shenzhen received "big gifts" from Guangdong Province and the central government. It was approved as a pilot area for comprehensive reform, to develop into an international metropolis, developing closer ties with neighboring Hong Kong. Also, ChiNext, the long-awaited Nasdaq-style stock market opened for trade.

Not long ago, the *Shenzhen 2010 Reform Plan* was issued. This year, the city will implement 27 reform projects, covering politics, economy, culture, environment, and public general welfare. Many of the projects, including reforms on civil servant management and district-level governmental institutions, are paving the way for similar policies throughout the country.

Some experts argue that after years of development and innovation, Shenzhen should be aiming at greater goals. It should not settle for being simply a national financial hub or hi-tech center, but focus on becoming an international city connecting the world. Others, however, advocate more careful planning, and staying grounded. Either way, the next 30 years are sure to bring more drastic changes and unexpected developments.

From a fishing village to a modern city. by Wan Quan

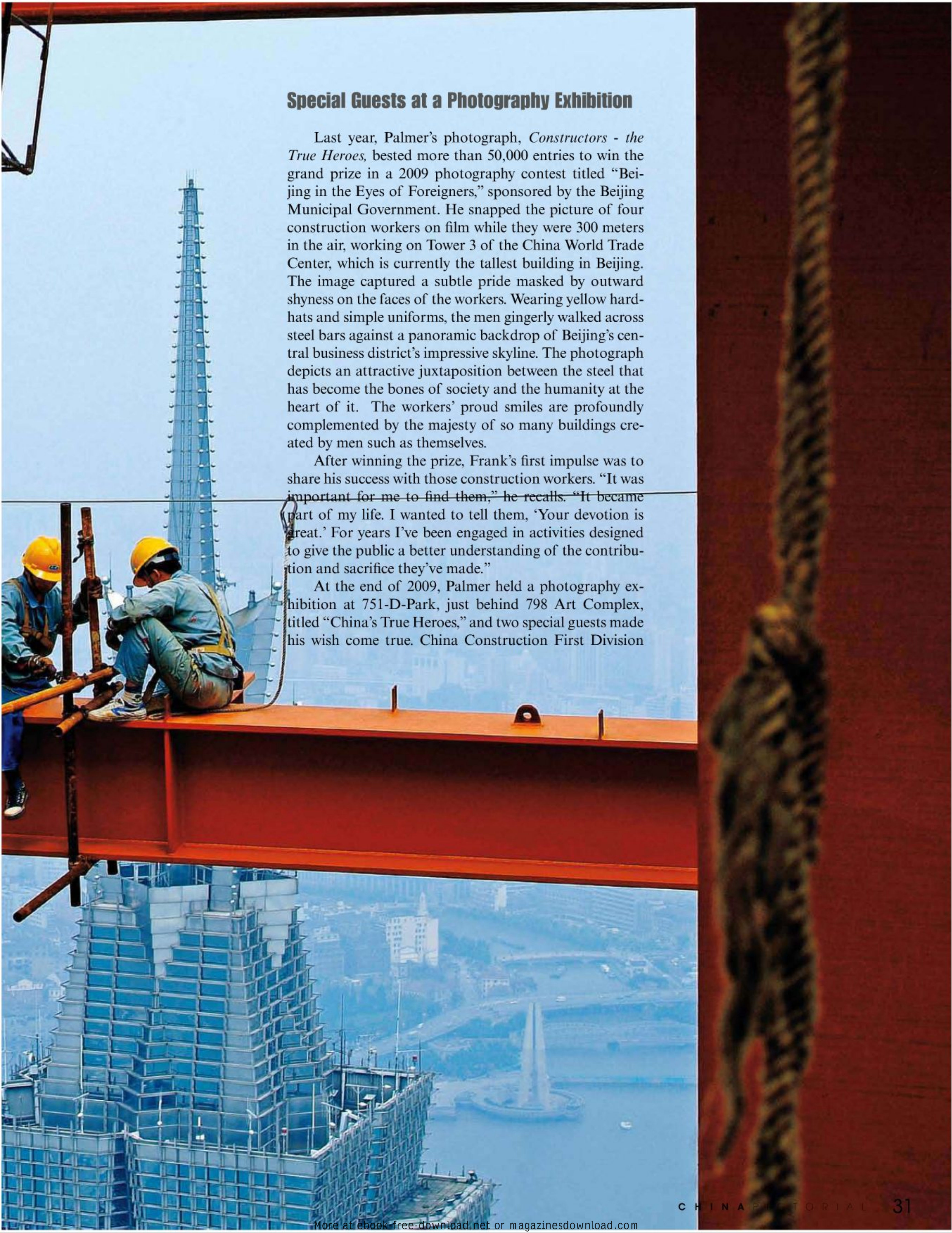


The Makings of a Great Photographer

Text by Zhang Yang
Photographs by Frank P. Palmer

When questioned about himself, soft-spoken Frank P. Palmer tends to give short answers, hiding behind wisps of gray hair. It takes topics like photography or China's social development to make the 69-year-old German photographer's eyes light up and his lips move rapidly. Unlike many of his peers who like to discuss the big picture, Palmer is more inclined to focus on thin slices. "Migrant workers are not the low end of society. On the contrary, they form its backbone and are true heroes," he argues.

Construction workers sitting and working on a beam of Shanghai World Financial Center, more than 500 meters above ground, opposite Jin Mao Tower.

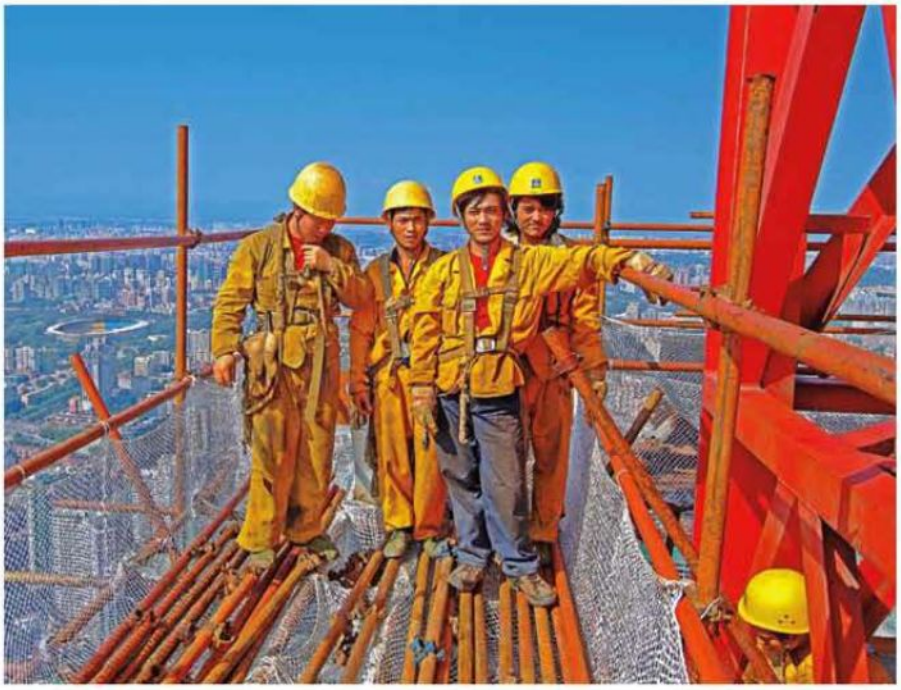


Special Guests at a Photography Exhibition

Last year, Palmer's photograph, *Constructors - the True Heroes,* bested more than 50,000 entries to win the grand prize in a 2009 photography contest titled "Beijing in the Eyes of Foreigners," sponsored by the Beijing Municipal Government. He snapped the picture of four construction workers on film while they were 300 meters in the air, working on Tower 3 of the China World Trade Center, which is currently the tallest building in Beijing. The image captured a subtle pride masked by outward shyness on the faces of the workers. Wearing yellow hardhats and simple uniforms, the men gingerly walked across steel bars against a panoramic backdrop of Beijing's central business district's impressive skyline. The photograph depicts an attractive juxtaposition between the steel that has become the bones of society and the humanity at the heart of it. The workers' proud smiles are profoundly complemented by the majesty of so many buildings created by men such as themselves.

After winning the prize, Frank's first impulse was to share his success with those construction workers. "It was important for me to find them," he recalls. "It became part of my life. I wanted to tell them, 'Your devotion is great.' For years I've been engaged in activities designed to give the public a better understanding of the contribution and sacrifice they've made."

At the end of 2009, Palmer held a photography exhibition at 751-D-Park, just behind 798 Art Complex, titled "China's True Heroes," and two special guests made his wish come true. China Construction First Division



In yellow hard-hats and uniforms, four workers stand on steel bars against a panoramic backdrop provided by the skyscrapers in Beijing's CBD. The picture took the grand prize of a 2009 Photo Contest "Beijing in the Eyes of Foreigners."

Group sent two of its employees, Tan Nengjun and Liu Hongjun, to the event wearing their familiar yellow hard-hats and uniforms. Palmer was clearly ecstatic to finally meet the subjects that he had seen so often in his winning photograph. Palmer thanked the workers with the gift of new digital cameras, along with his personal instructions on how to take photos.

Shooting Pictures on High

Frank P. Palmer, born in Germany, started his professional photography career in the mid 1970s. Since 1989, Palmer has been living, traveling and working extensively in Australia and China amongst other places. Over the last twenty years he has built an impressive archive of thousands of photographs and images taken with large format cameras.

Construction and contemporary architecture are his favorite subjects, and it's no surprise that not only finished buildings attract him. He likes to archive the entire construction process, while documenting the workers involved as well. In Palmer's eyes, seeing those responsible for the "making" of a certain building is more interesting than seeing the static finished product. "In the 1930s, a photographer recorded the construction process of the Empire State Building, which is a landmark of New York City," he explains, showing slides of the astonishing black-and-white photos. "Beijing is a great city as well, and I always want to record the construction of a great city. In about five decades, when people look back at those pictures, they will think, 'wow, that's how our great city was built.' Just like us now." For the sake of art, he has spent years recording the entire building process of such landmarks as the Shanghai World Financial Center and the new CCTV (China Central Television) headquarters in Beijing.

This working style is what brought Palmer to the China World Trade Center Tower 3, at a height of 330 meters above the ground. From such a height, even dropping a small screw could cause a fatal accident. Even though standard safety precautions such as double-layer nets were implemented, human feelings of insecurity are only natural in such an environment where laws of physics rule. However, Frank had experience working at such heights. "I don't get nervous at all. The safety measures are adequate. You should know what you are doing, step on the right position before getting down to your own business."

No dizziness, no trembling, no fear. Wearing a helmet and a safety belt, with a heavy professional camera in his hands, Frank's agile feet took him back and forth, up and down, floating across the beams like a duck on water, to document every bit of progress. He not only focused on the reinforced concrete and construction machinery, but also turned the spotlight to the construction workers whose sweat transforms the creative design of a blueprint into reality. Out of respect to them, Frank joined in their labor and recorded their contributions in vivid photographs. "Sometimes I stayed there for five or six hours," he grins. "I loved my time with the workers. Though I couldn't speak Chinese well, they were very friendly. It feels nice to communicate with them even through body language most of the time. They are the true heroes of China."

A German Photographer in China

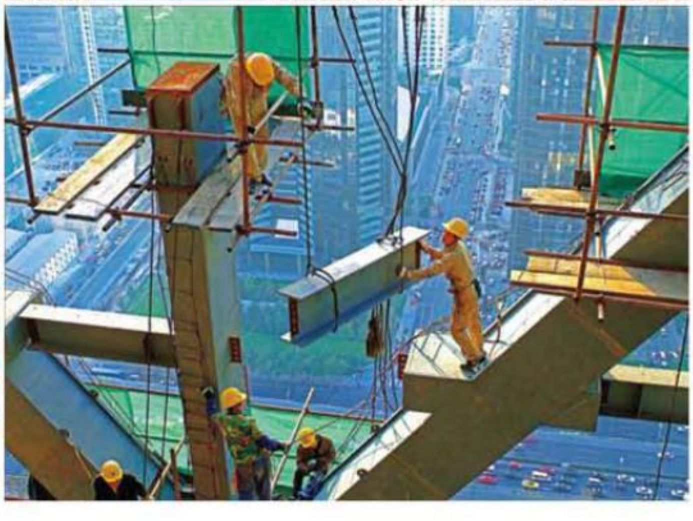
In China's construction industry, quality and safety are largely controlled by migrant workers. Only when their basic rights are guaranteed and their creative potential is tapped, can they enhance production efficiency. Workers' right to survival is of paramount concern to both the government and construction companies. Witnessing their lives and development first-hand in the recent years seems to have kindled Palmer's humanistic concern for them, resulting in him dubbing them "true heroes" and the "backbone of society." This ideology is a primary factor in Palmer's artwork winning so much acclaim. As an outsider, the photographer understands China even more than many native Chinese. His pure love for architecture and the construction process, coupled with skillful and exquisite photographing techniques, a professional spirit to continually improve, and most significantly, the genuine respect for the laboring class, have culminated in a master artist. Such a mind in such an environment is ideal for the genesis of a masterpiece.

For the time being, Palmer has settled in Beijing and opened his own culture development company in the Chaoyang Business District, staying busy with design and photography. When asked about his next project, he responded, "That depends on opportunities." Photography needs inspiration, but good art needs far more than that. Palmer's every photo tells a story. "My photographs are the reflection of my soul, my experience, and my view of the world."

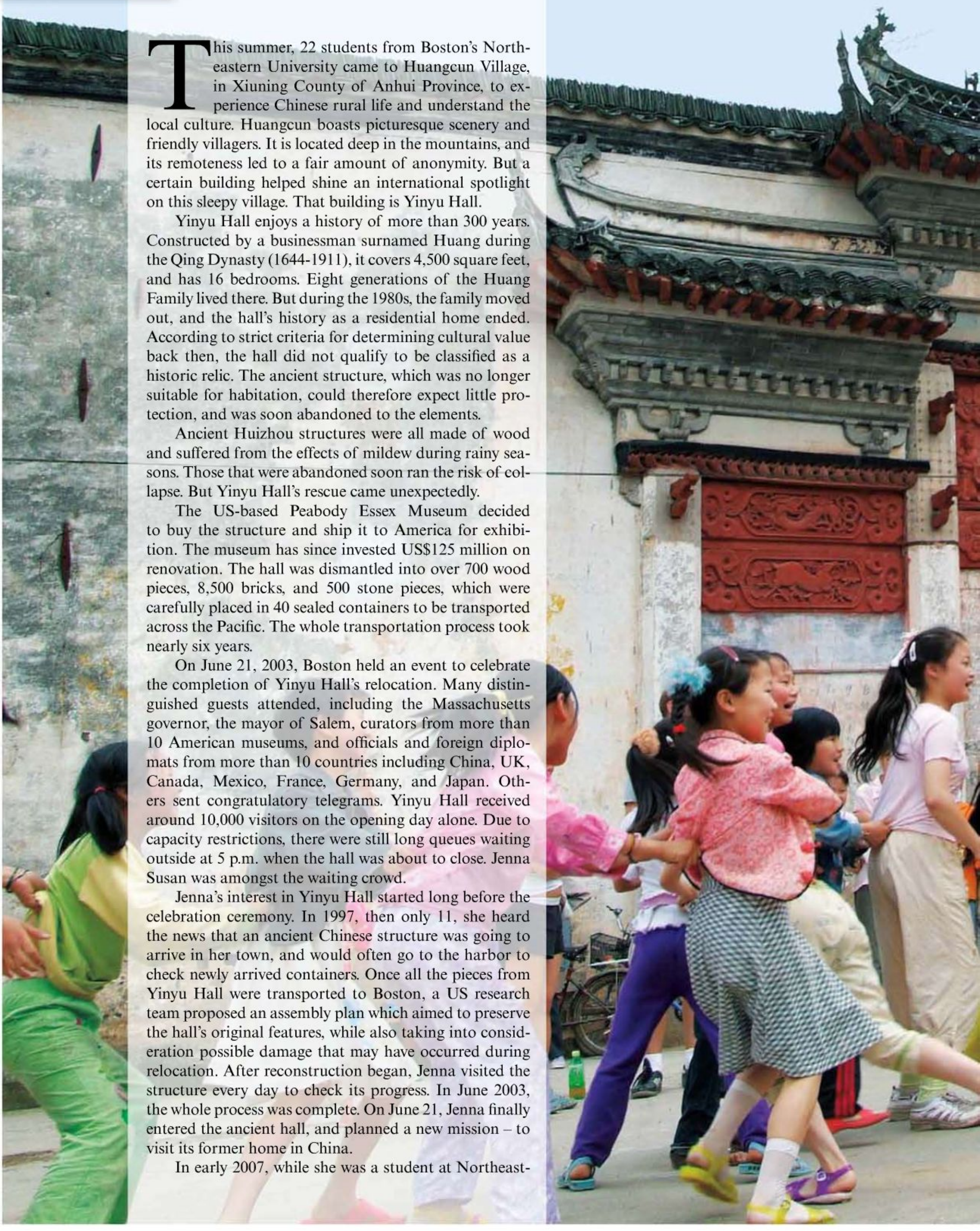
Construction workers pulling materials up to the site of the new CCTV headquarters.

A worker looking down from a narrow beam of a construction site, above all the surrounding towers.

Three workers cooperating high above ground.



Manual power joined with iron and steel can be a recipe for building prosperity.



This summer, 22 students from Boston's Northeastern University came to Huangcun Village, in Xiuning County of Anhui Province, to experience Chinese rural life and understand the local culture. Huangcun boasts picturesque scenery and friendly villagers. It is located deep in the mountains, and its remoteness led to a fair amount of anonymity. But a certain building helped shine an international spotlight on this sleepy village. That building is Yinyu Hall.

Yinyu Hall enjoys a history of more than 300 years. Constructed by a businessman surnamed Huang during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), it covers 4,500 square feet, and has 16 bedrooms. Eight generations of the Huang Family lived there. But during the 1980s, the family moved out, and the hall's history as a residential home ended. According to strict criteria for determining cultural value back then, the hall did not qualify to be classified as a historic relic. The ancient structure, which was no longer suitable for habitation, could therefore expect little protection, and was soon abandoned to the elements.

Ancient Huizhou structures were all made of wood and suffered from the effects of mildew during rainy seasons. Those that were abandoned soon ran the risk of collapse. But Yinyu Hall's rescue came unexpectedly.

The US-based Peabody Essex Museum decided to buy the structure and ship it to America for exhibition. The museum has since invested US$125 million on renovation. The hall was dismantled into over 700 wood pieces, 8,500 bricks, and 500 stone pieces, which were carefully placed in 40 sealed containers to be transported across the Pacific. The whole transportation process took nearly six years.

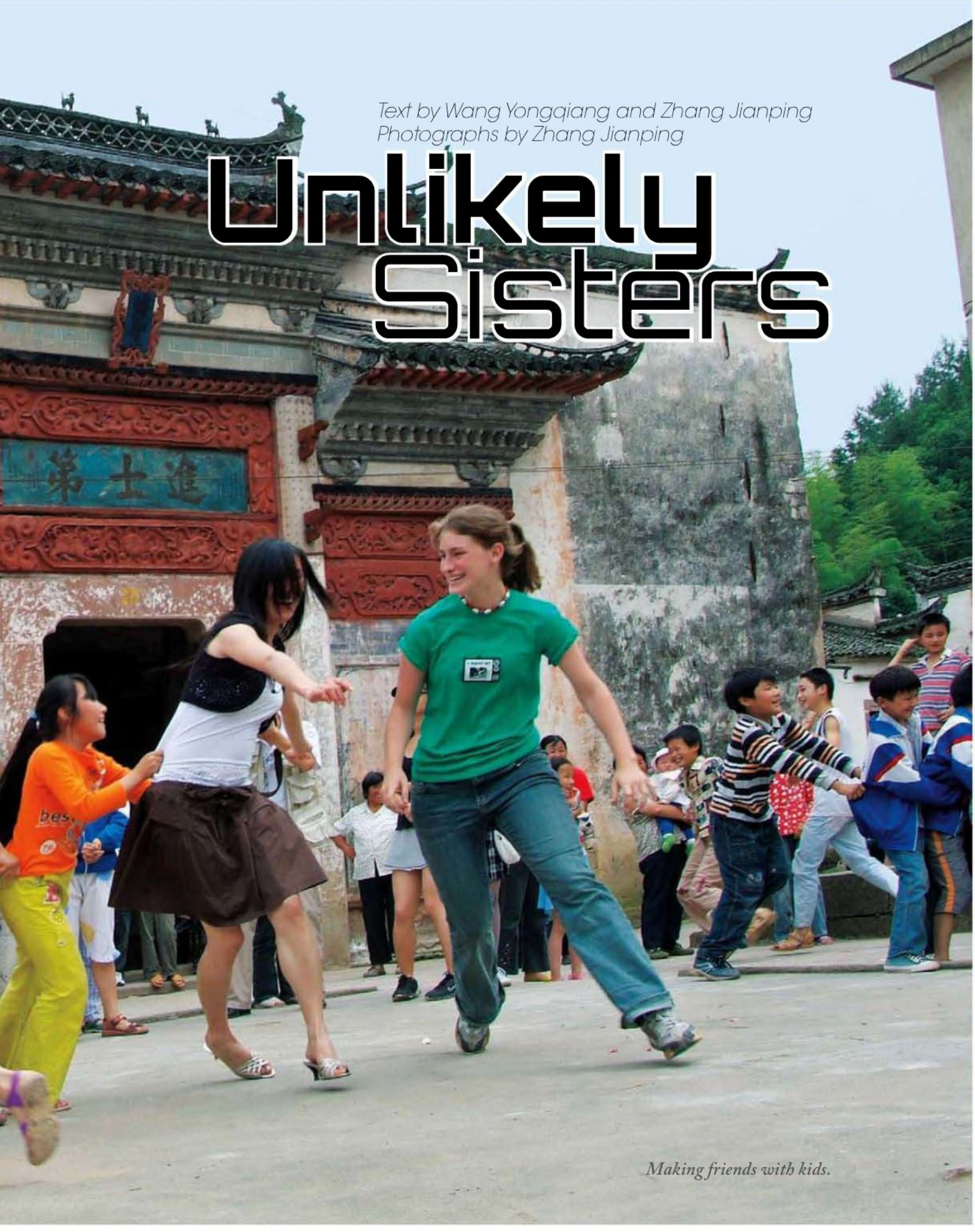
On June 21, 2003, Boston held an event to celebrate the completion of Yinyu Hall's relocation. Many distinguished guests attended, including the Massachusetts governor, the mayor of Salem, curators from more than 10 American museums, and officials and foreign diplomats from more than 10 countries including China, UK, Canada, Mexico, France, Germany, and Japan. Others sent congratulatory telegrams. Yinyu Hall received around 10,000 visitors on the opening day alone. Due to capacity restrictions, there were still long queues waiting outside at 5 p.m. when the hall was about to close. Jenna Susan was amongst the waiting crowd.

Jenna's interest in Yinyu Hall started long before the celebration ceremony. In 1997, then only 11, she heard the news that an ancient Chinese structure was going to arrive in her town, and would often go to the harbor to check newly arrived containers. Once all the pieces from Yinyu Hall were transported to Boston, a US research team proposed an assembly plan which aimed to preserve the hall's original features, while also taking into consideration possible damage that may have occurred during relocation. After reconstruction began, Jenna visited the structure every day to check its progress. In June 2003, the whole process was complete. On June 21, Jenna finally entered the ancient hall, and planned a new mission – to visit its former home in China.

In early 2007, while she was a student at Northeast-

Text by Wang Yongqiang and Zhang Jianping
Photographs by Zhang Jianping

Unlikely Sisters



Making friends with kids.

ern University, Jenna suggested to the local town council that Salem become a sister town of Huangcun Village. On April 26, a hearing was held to discuss the proposal, during which Jenna delivered a speech. She waited nervously for the outcome of the vote, and her proposal was approved. On May 21, together with 20 classmates, a delighted Jenna travelled to China to announce the bond of friendship.

For her great contribution to Sino-American cultural exchange, Jenna was named an honorary villager by the mayor of Huangcun, the first occasion that such a title has been given in China to an ordinary foreigner. Ever since then, Huangcun has become an important access point for students from Northeastern University interested in China and its history.

These American students worked and lived with local families during their stay. They were divided into groups to work side by side with farmers, and took part in plowing, picking tea, gathering the harvest, and cleaning the village. They also provided free English classes for children in the village. "I've learned Chinese history and have deep respect for the country," revealed one student in the team. "Through working with locals, I have developed a deeper understanding of a famous line from a Chinese poem: Every grain comes from hard toil." Another exchange student believes that, "China and the US are both great nations, and the citizens of the two countries are generally friendly. The culture in this village is just fascinating."

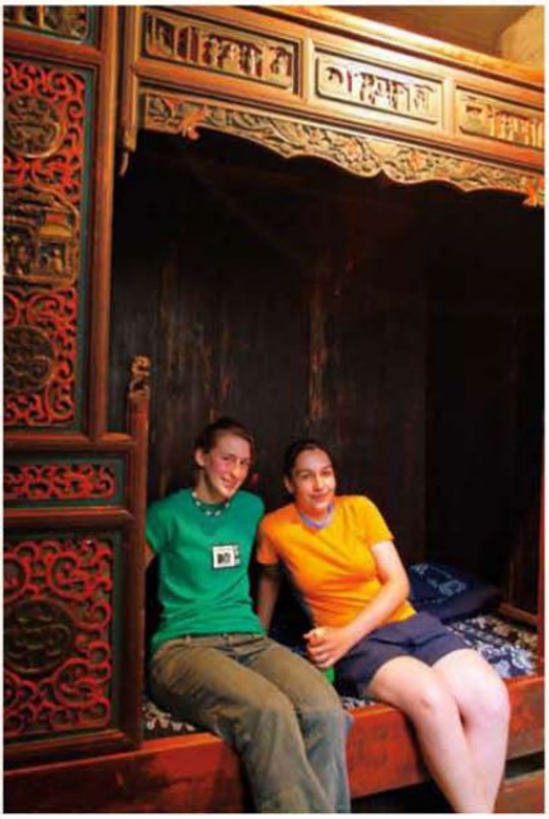
As for the villagers, they welcomed the influx of new guests. They also began carefully developing the tourism industry, while ensuring that they protect their local culture. After all, it was culture – and the magnificent Yinyu Hall – which brought this fantastic opportunity.

Working with locals.

Jenna was named an honorary villager of Huangcun. by Pan Cheng

"Want to study English with me?"

A water buffalo pulling a plow.



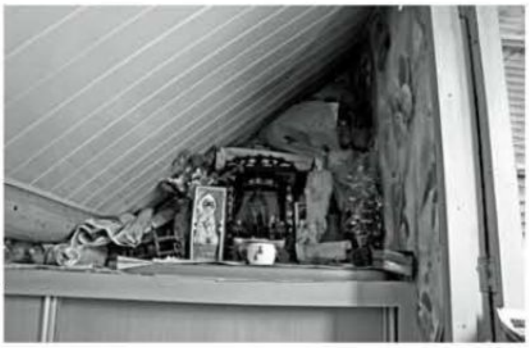
An elegant Chinese style bed.

Visiting locals.

A Visit to Vintage Shanghai

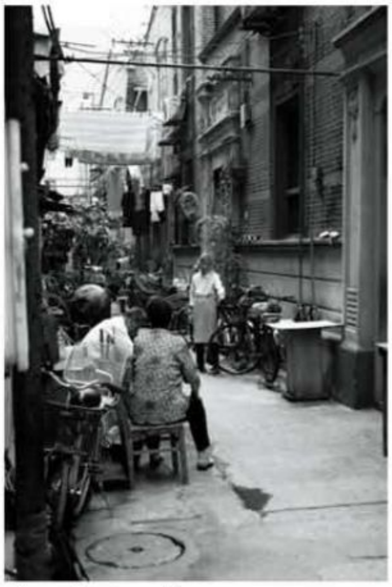
Text and photographs by Fang Shuo

My great aunt keeps a sentimental attachment to the old house in which she has lived for years.



Heavenly images are enshrined in a small space in the loft.

Visitors to Shanghai may have noticed some examples of the city's once prevalent *shikumen* (two or three story townhouses) in Tianzifang and Xintiandi, or soaked in the ambience along the *nongtang* (narrow lanes and alleys) of old Shanghai. But few have laid eyes on the interiors of these structures, or got a true sense of how the locals actually live.



A typical traditional alleyway of Shanghai.

Shanghai is unbearably hot in July and August, and most Shanghainese like to stay indoors with air-conditioning. But families in older urban areas often do not have the privilege of piped cool air – families just like my great aunt's.

During my visit to the World Expo, I take the opportunity to pay her a visit. The taxi speeds away from Hongqiao Airport, passing over viaducts and through the endless sprawl of high-rises. I am impressed by the diverse international architecture on the Bund and by the dizzying selection of skyscrapers in Pudong New Area. After passing through bustling Nanjing Shopping Street, my taxi pulls over at an old lane in Xiamen Street.

My great aunt is over 70 years old, and her family has lived in a *shikumen* home for generations. *Shikumen* means "stone gate," a reference to the main door of each house where two wood door planks are reinforced by stone bars. They were first called *shigumen*, but *shikumen* is the modern pronunciation. Houses usually cover 2 or 3 floors, and are very narrow inside. At the back part of the building there is usually a courtyard which basks in natural light. My great aunt's house lies on the top floor. Stairs are still made of wood, high and steep. Each stair is so thin that I can only place half of my foot on one. They creak with age as I make my way up, clutching the handrail gingerly and taking my time. It takes some effort and I wonder how old people can manage the journey every day.

The interior of a *shikumen* house is often a bit untidy. Daily necessities are stored in a small room, which can quickly become overcrowded. The overall layout of the house is quite interesting, something like a modern "duplex apartment." The lowest point of the house is the doorway, flanked by stairs on both sides. The kitchen lies down the corridor to the left while the washbasin and bath are located at the end of this passage. The 2 square meter space on the rear left, which is enclosed by a curtain, is the toilet.

The lavatory used to be made of wood but very few of these remain now. Modern versions adopt a similar flushing technology to that used on airplanes. But in the past, every family had to take out the waste in the evenings where someone would come to collect it. After dinner, electric cookers have to be put in the toilet for storage. There is usually not even enough space for an extra soy sauce bottle in the kitchen!

The houses are very efficient when each area of space is used intelligently. A room to the side is occupied by my uncle and his family. The stairs on the right lead to the living room, where the ceiling is sloped. In the nook where the roof meets the wall, a small idol is placed for worshipping.

The living room is divided by a partition, with the inner part transformed into a bedroom, which is a few stairs higher than the rest of the room. The partition acts like a counter, where people can see through to the other space. The small room appears to be very full. The aged wooden beams and dormers appear like manuscripts recording the fluctuations of time.

The evening sunlight splays through the dormers, casting a warm glow onto my great aunt's wedding photo, which has become slightly discolored. Though the photo was taken some time afterward, it still acts as a faithful record to the happy coupling of my great aunt and uncle. The cool wind enters through one dormer and breezes back out through another. The coolness it brings puts me at ease and confers peace on the building. I tell my great aunt I am going to the Expo tomorrow and she wants to join me. It has been billed as a great event in the history of the city, and the nation as a whole.

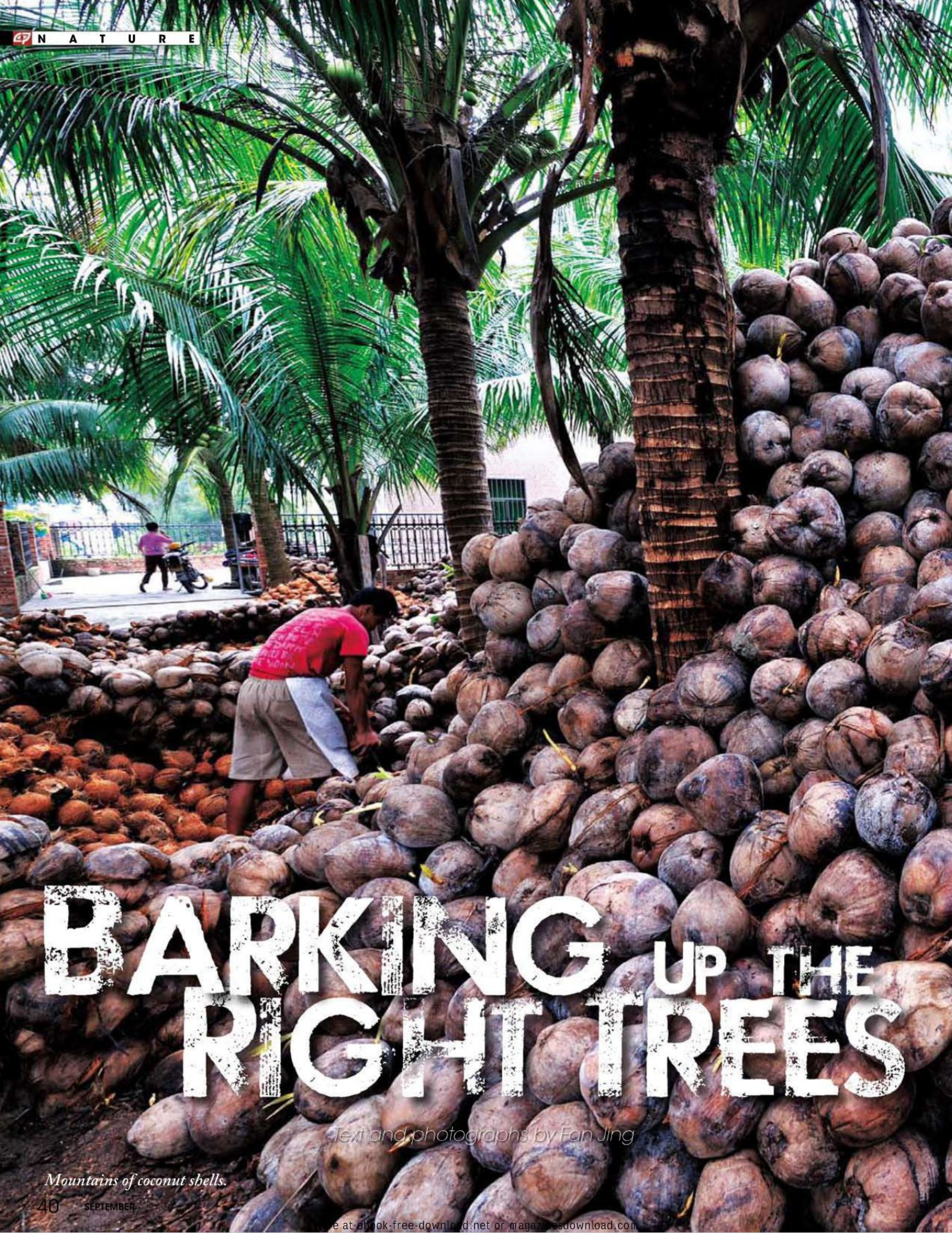
I agree to return again tomorrow. As I leave my great aunt's house, she sees me off in the traditional way, walking down half the stairs and turning on the lamp for me. Under the faint light, I take my steps carefully. As I glance back at her and wave, I feel a great warmth for the traditional lifestyles of ordinary Shanghai people.

The living room is fully packed.

No spare space can be found in the house, not even the walls of the hallway.

A wooden stairway with tall, steep steps.

Sunlight pierces through the window to warm the bedroom.



BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREES

Text and photographs by Fan Jing

Mountains of coconut shells.

Resting off the southernmost tip of China, tropical Hainan Island is renowned for its fruits. According to historical records, China has cultivated coconuts for over 2,000 years. Hainan produces plenty of them, especially in the northeastern city of Wenchang, which accounts for 52% of the coconuts grown in China, and has been dubbed "coconut hometown." A belt thick with coconut palms stretches 15 kilometers along the coast of the city's eastern suburbs, the longest coastal artery of the tree in China. It includes over 500,000 individual trees producing an array of coconut varieties.

In Hainan, one can buy coconut milk everywhere. A coconut usually costs two to three yuan, but can be as much as five yuan in tourist areas. Vendors pierce the shell with a long sharp tool to create a hole for a straw, through which milk can be sucked out. Outside a factory, brown hills are visible from a considerable distance, and closer inspection reveals that they are piles of shells, towering above passing cars.

Further exploration unearths dense coconut groves flourishing like prehistoric jungles. Towering coconut palms along the roads rustle in the wind as their feather-like leaves shelter those below from the fierce rays of the South China Sea sun. From a speeding automobile, the trunks become a gray blur against a reddish backdrop, while dark green leaves above form an intricate net. With every turn of the head, it is impossible to avoid coconuts, whether it's palms, fibers, shells, shreds, or the coconut itself.

The coconut groves are primarily comprised of old trees that have grown thick and tall over the years. Elaborate patterns in the grain of their bark are as impressive as the rings that testify to their years of growth. Quite a few casually curve and bend over time, the bark conforming to each adaptation.

In processing plants, coconut "meat" produces copra, milk powder, protein, coconut milk, shredded coconut, and oil, just to name a few of its plentiful byproducts. To extract such resources, the meat must first be separated from the second layer, known as the mesocarp, and then cut into small cubes by hand before they can be fed to a shredding machine. The majority of employees at the coconut plant are 40 to 50 years old. The factory forewoman explained that younger people prefer to work elsewhere because the job is tedious and the salary low.

Outside the main floor, several men were stripping copra (dried meat of the seed used to produce oil) from shells. They separated coconuts, shells, and copra into three piles according to color: gray indicates old coconuts, brown is the copra, and half-brown, half-gray is the split shells. Although the work may seem elementary, such a task is quite strenuous with only a simple tool. Sometimes the workers muster every ounce of strength to pierce the hard shells. If they don't push with the angle exactly right, the coconut won't budge. Those who make such a living with a knife depend on strength and experience every day.

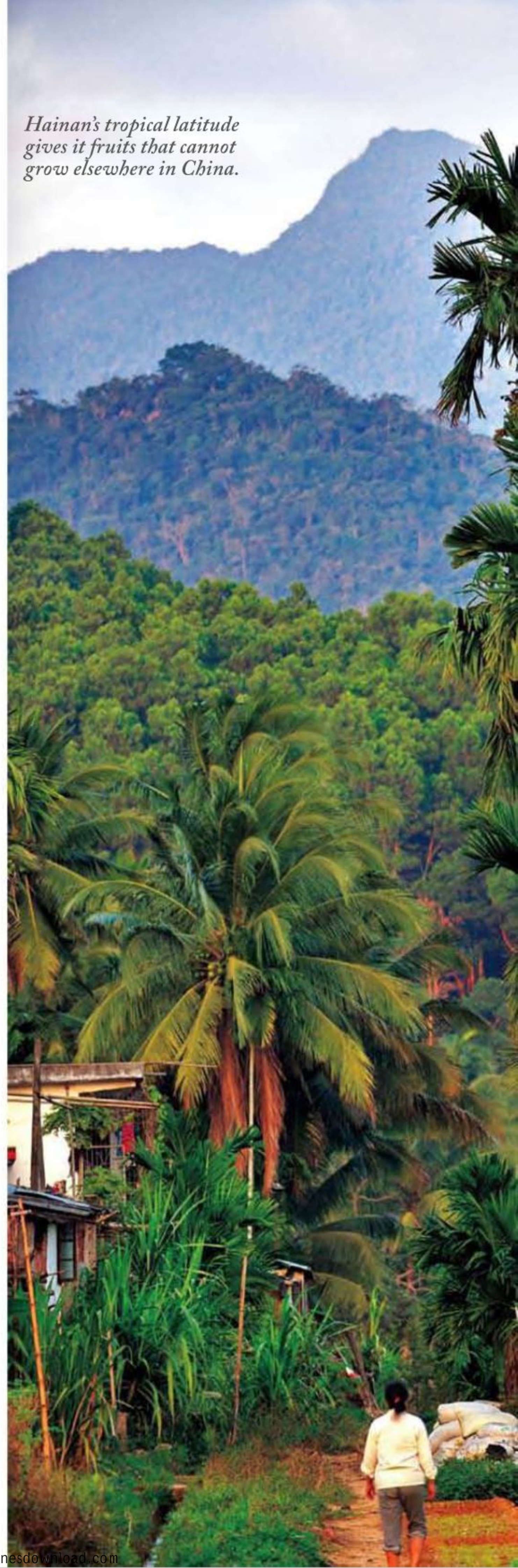
Every part of the coconut is useful. The rock-hard shell will never warp in hot and cold temperatures, and it can be processed for fibers, activated carbon, or even to make musical instruments. The copra can be carved as well as used to produce oil. Wood from the long trunks is a popular material for furniture or construction. Leaves are used for fuel and to create baskets and other crafts. The milk can become coconut wine or candy, and although coconut oil is used primarily for industrial purposes, it's also used in soap and toothpaste.

Many may not be aware of the possible uses for coconut milk, but hospitable Wenchang locals will be happy to demonstrate its importance. First, it is used to judge a stored coconut's age. The longer a coconut is stored, the more milk it will lose. Secondly, they know how to extract milk from the meat. The meat is mashed in hot water before being filtered with gauze, and after some heating, drinkable milk remains. Culinary enthusiasts find it useful as flavoring for soup or to make juice.

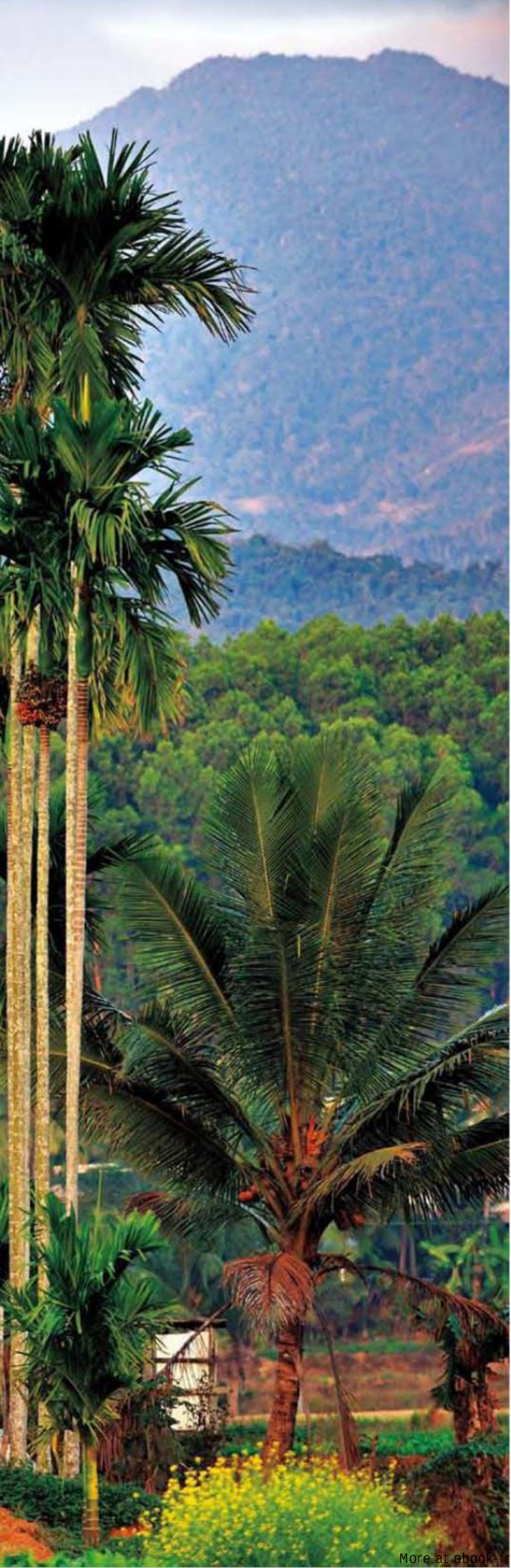
The fibers from coconut shells are useful for making natural mattresses.

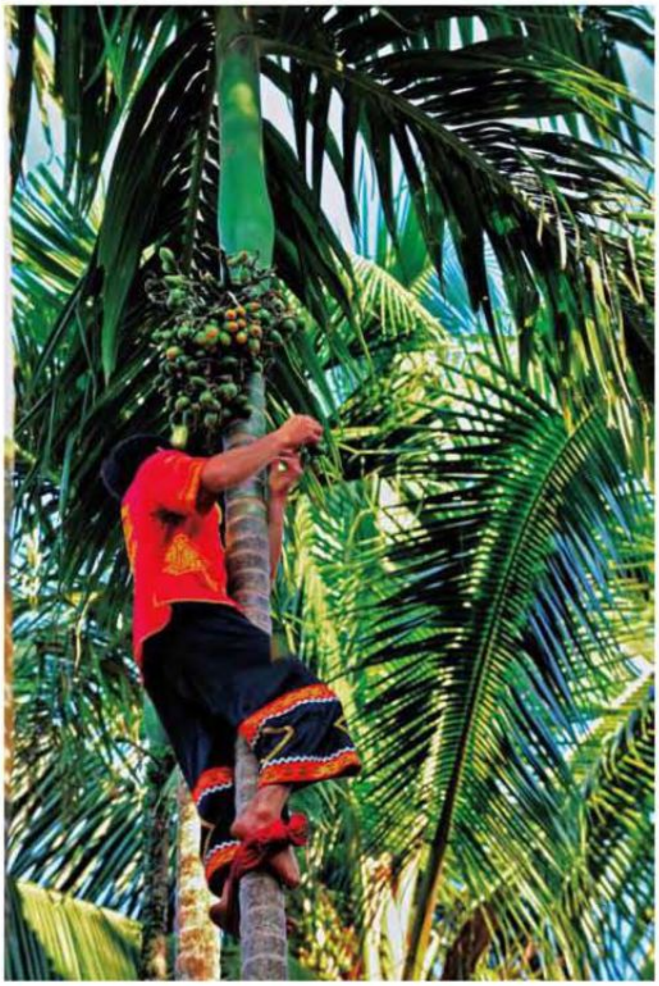
A freshly split coconut.

Workers process copra. Each part of the coconut has value.



Hainan's tropical latitude gives it fruits that cannot grow elsewhere in China.





Mango is one of the primary fruits in Hainan. Picking mangos requires substantial skill.

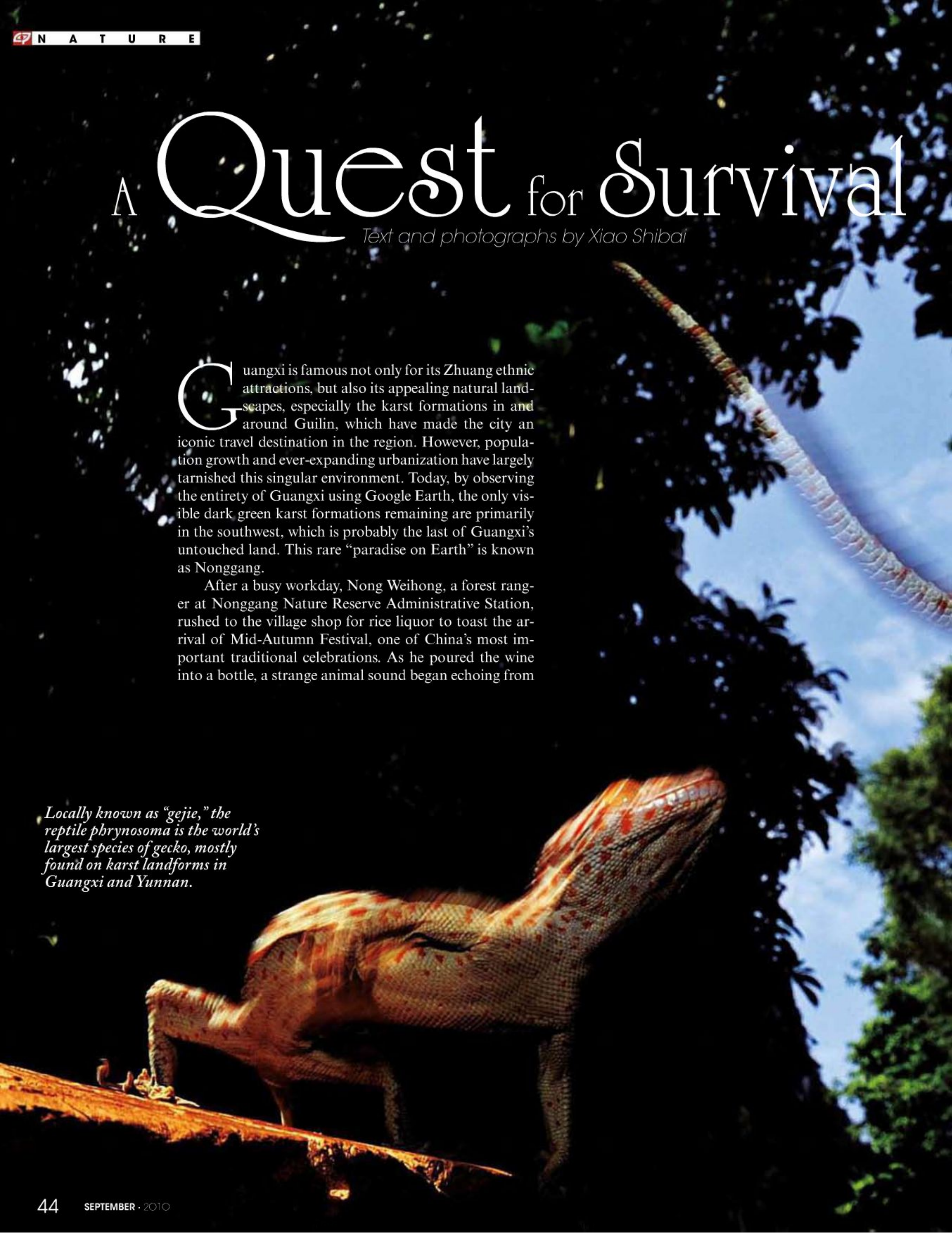
Two men were working at a pond in the coconut grove covered with a layer of floating brown coconut fibers. One of them explained that the fibers from coconut shells can be sold as raw materials to be used by mattress factories. Coconut fibers are also used to make cushions, mats, brooms, brushes, ropes, and other such items. Washable, breathable, and durable, the coconut fiber is a useful nontoxic natural material.

Mattresses are divided into those composed of "hard fiber" and "soft fiber." Before the technological age, factories primarily produced the hard fiber variety. The process first requires sifting fibers through wire nettings, then bending them into a three-dimensional network with machines, and finally grinding them into a certain shape with natural latex. The soft, or "flexible," fiber requires more processing, such as a newer three-dimensional networking technique that produces soundless springs of natural fiber. Featuring thousands of airholes per square meter, the breathable mattresses don't deteriorate in moist air. Although pricier, natural breathable mattresses stay warmer in winter and cooler in summer, making them more desirable than synthetic beds.

A favorite local meal in a Wenchang restaurant is "coconut with sticky rice," which features steamed sticky rice mixed with coconut meat and milk, diced ham, and squid. Visitors rarely forget the sweet smell of the moment the coconut is opened right at the table.

A Quest for Survival

Text and photographs by Xiao Shibai



Guangxi is famous not only for its Zhuang ethnic attractions, but also its appealing natural landscapes, especially the karst formations in and around Guilin, which have made the city an iconic travel destination in the region. However, population growth and ever-expanding urbanization have largely tarnished this singular environment. Today, by observing the entirety of Guangxi using Google Earth, the only visible dark green karst formations remaining are primarily in the southwest, which is probably the last of Guangxi's untouched land. This rare "paradise on Earth" is known as Nonggang.

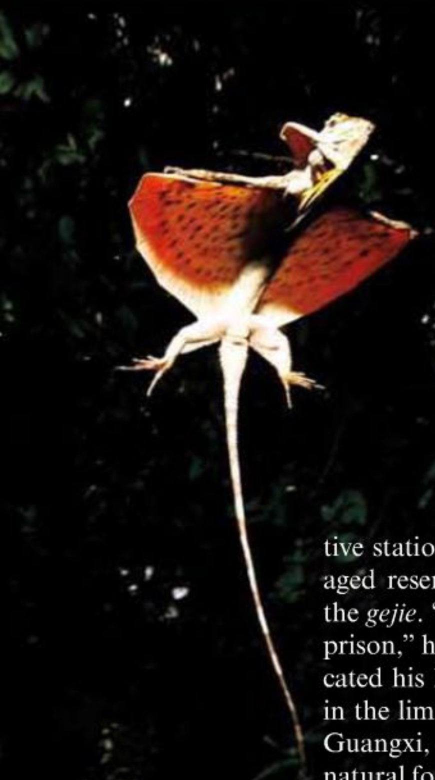
After a busy workday, Nong Weihong, a forest ranger at Nonggang Nature Reserve Administrative Station, rushed to the village shop for rice liquor to toast the arrival of Mid-Autumn Festival, one of China's most important traditional celebrations. As he poured the wine into a bottle, a strange animal sound began echoing from

Locally known as "gejie," the reptile phrynosoma is the world's largest species of gecko, mostly found on karst landforms in Guangxi and Yunnan.

the cliffs above. Nong glanced up the side of the cliff and exclaimed, "This one is big! They've been around a lot recently."

The creature, which was attracted to the scent of the spirit, is known by locals as a "gejie" which is onomatopoeic for its cry. Scientifically known as reptile phrynosoma, the lizard is the world's largest species of gecko, and it is believed by advocates of traditional Chinese medicine to be effective in treating phthisis, asthma, emphysema, as well as kidney and spleen deficiencies. Villagers tell cautionary tales of hunters in past years climbing the mountain to capture the animal, only to fall off the precarious cliffs. The gecko is known for its fierce temper, and in China it can only be found on mountain cliffs and withered trees of karst landforms in Guangxi and Yunnan. During mating season, the geckos tweet zealously to attract the attention of the opposite sex.

Chen Tianbo, director of the reserve's administra-



tive station, claims that Nonggang is now the best-managed reserve in Guangxi, with a strict ban on catching the *gejie*. "Possession of a *gejie* is punishable by a year in prison," he explains. As the station head, Chen has dedicated his knowledge in zoology to his work. Nonggang, in the limestone monsoon forest region of southwestern Guangxi, embraces a 10,077-square-kilometer protected natural forest of diverse vegetation, including dense limestone flora. As a result of floral diversity, a similarly wide variety of animals inhabit this area, and considering the many untouched cliffs and precipices, both domestic and foreign experts believe that Nonggang is a sanctuary for some of China's most endangered animals.

According to locals, Nonggang's animals generally come out on cloudy and windy nights. When the moon is bright enough to illuminate the forests, many creatures tend to hide in caves for security. For an infrared camera equipped photographer such as myself, this raises some difficulties. An automatic infrared camera signals the shutter with an off-board infrared receiving and transmitting device. When an animal passes the transmitter, the receiver instantly activates the shutter to capture the scene. After nearly a week of working with several cameras combined to function without interruption, I was left with only a few images of butterflies. I became uneasy about my chances of fulfilling my shooting plan.

However, animals eventually came out for food. In late autumn, when forest food and water resources begin running thin, wild animals must travel further from their habitats to search for food closer to human-inhabited places. Early each morning, I saw a group of bold macaques descending the mountain to sneak some water from fishing ponds. Farmers carefully watched their chickens to make sure none were taken by invading leopards. I, on the other hand, was on a mission to document such creatures.

I decided to set infrared transmitters along paths that the animals seemed to travel regularly. As I became more familiar with it, I found the seemingly messy dense forest to be actually well-organized, with plants of different heights co-existing in a manner that reminds me of tall and shorter buildings clumped together in man-made cities. A jungle can be divided into ground, middle, and canopy layers, each hosting a variety of strange and rare species. The animals' pathways, though not easily recognized due to their irregularities, form a vital traffic network. Much like highways in cities, these paths enhance the mobility of wild animals.

During the next few weeks of my project, I photographed many rare and precious wild species, including leopards, tree shrew, and Prionodon pardicolor. Experts assert that documenting more than four carnivorous species within a month indicates that a forest has a relatively high degree of healthy growth. According to the reserve's administrative station, because of the staff's frequent efforts to educate villagers in the periphery, many former hunters have turned in their guns to become sugarcane farmers. Illegal logging is a rarity these days.

On the morning of my last day of shooting, Director Chen and several bird experts returned to the station with jubilance, after witnessing the rare Nonggang Rufous-capped babblers. The discovery of this new species in Nonggang several years ago sparked a sensation in biology circles. Today, this still mysterious land is known to be home to many rare species, some of which may be even more precious than the giant panda, such as the golden cat, clouded leopard, and Owston's palm civet. Experts anticipate even more inspiring discoveries in Nonggang because of increased conservation efforts and expanding scientific exploration.

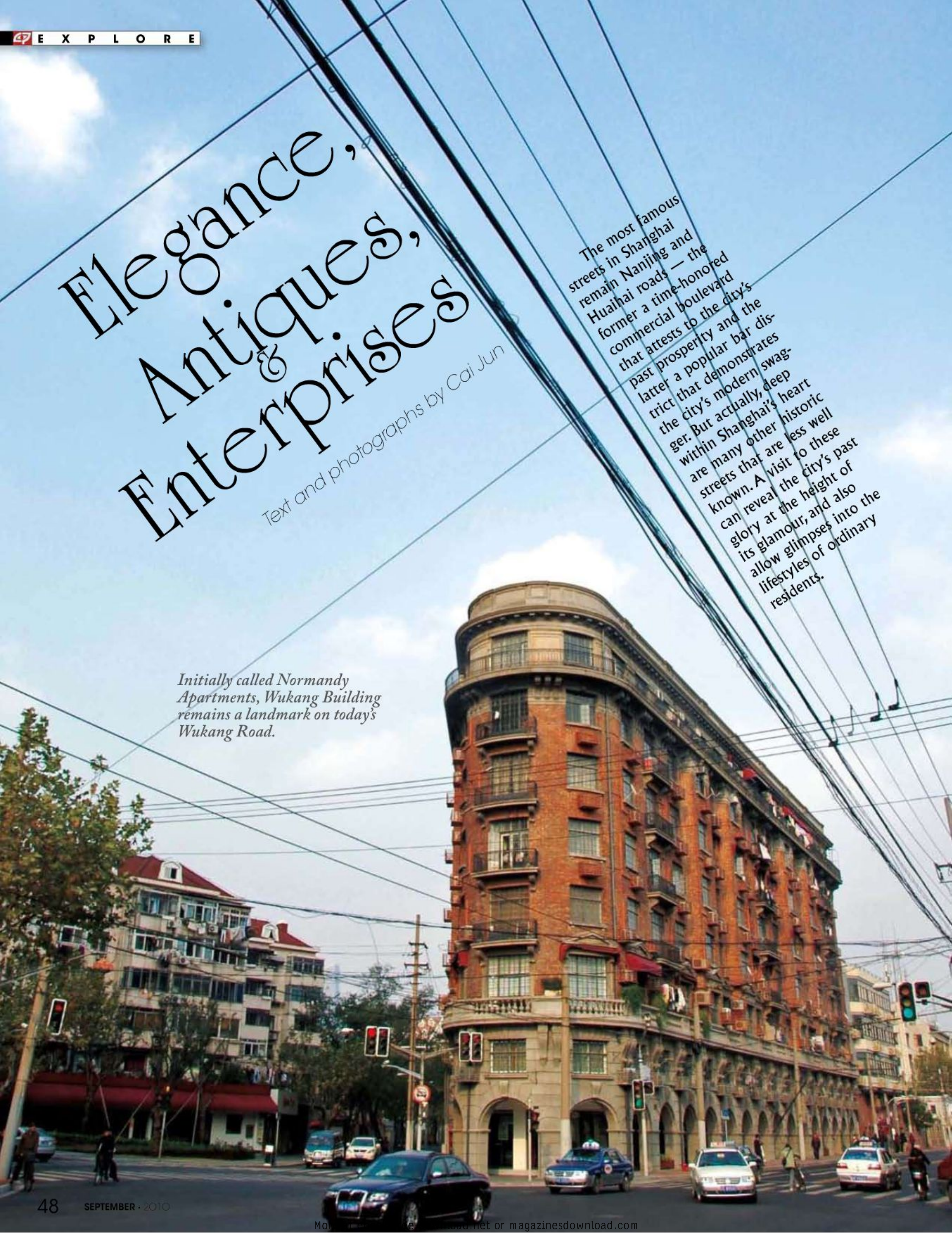
A Burmese ferret-badger examines some food.

With a well-conserved floral environment, Nonggang Nature Reserve is a paradise for a plethora of exotic animals.

About Nonggang Nature Reserve

Home to abundant biological resources, Nonggang Nature Reserve is one of China's 14 key areas with terrestrial bio-diversity of global significance and one of the 40 class-A reserves jointly named by China's State Forestry Administration and the World Wild Fund for Nature. Current statistics show that so far 139 animal species in 57 categories of 22 orders have been proven to live in the reserve, of which the white-headed langur, Presbytis francoisi, Assamese macaque, clouded leopard, python, and dwarf musk deer are under state first-class protection. Nonggang also features a wide variety of plants, some also under state first-class protection. Thanks to good recent conservation, the timber volume has soared from 120,000 cubic meters in 1979 to nearly 600,000 cubic meters today. Nongang is 98.8 percent forested, more than many other reserves in Guangxi.

Locals still lead a relatively antiquated life, so the eco-environment of the mountains has been well-sustained.



Elegance, Antiques, & Enterprises

Text and photographs by Cai Jun

The most famous streets in Shanghai remain Nanjing and Huaihai roads — the former a time-honored commercial boulevard that attests to the city's past prosperity and the latter a popular bar district that demonstrates the city's modern swagger. But actually, deep within Shanghai's heart are many other historic streets that are less well known. A visit to these can reveal the city's past glory at the height of its glamour, and also allow glimpses into the lifestyles of ordinary residents.

Initially called Normandy Apartments, Wukang Building remains a landmark on today's Wukang Road.

Shanghai's Most Elegant Road

Though seemingly insignificant amidst Shanghai's crisscrossing traffic network, Wukang Road is dubbed the "most elegant old road in Shanghai," largely because its countless exotic buildings demonstrate endless elegance and remind people of the city's history as the eastern hub of European business in the early 20th century.

Located in the former French Concession, the road was constructed in 1907 and initially named Ferguson Road. At the time, in the process of expanding their colonial settlement in Shanghai, France fell into dispute with other countries such as Britain and the United States. The dispute was eventually resolved under the mediation of American missionary John C. Ferguson. The municipal council of the French Concession named the road after him in honor. In October 1943, it was renamed Wukang Road.

Compared with the bustle of nearby Huaihai West Road, Wukang Road is quite tranquil. There are not many pedestrians, and numerous European-style buildings add to the relaxed charm. Each building has a storied past and the road is collectively dubbed "heritage architecture under municipal-level protection." The buildings are diverse in architectural styles: some are characterized by exquisite Spanish-style pinnacles, and some feature elegant Italian-style semi-round balconies covered with overgrown evergreen vines. Several roadside florists provide color, and shop workers can often be seen napping amongst bouquets. Occasionally, a couple of foreign pedestrians pass by. This tranquil street testifies to Shanghai's former elegance.

Wukang Road is lined with exotic buildings.

Located in the former French Concession, Wukang Road remains popular among foreign visitors.

An ordinary office building regains its former glory after renovation by a Hong Kong investment group.

Tips

Stretching 1.71 kilometers in Xuhui District, Wukang Road is lined with more than 40 historic buildings, once the homes of celebrated politicians, businessmen, scholars, and artists. Among the former residents, the most notable are revolutionary politician Huang Xing (1874-1916), steel magnate Zhu Hengqing (1902-1986), wheat flour magnate Sun Duosen (1867-1919), noted Chinese writer Ba Jin (1904-2005), and movie stars Zhao Dan (1915-1980) and Sun Daolin (1921-2007).

The Former Residence of Soong Ching-ling: In the winter of 1948, Soong Ching-ling (1893-1981), the wife of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, moved into the building at the entrance of Wukang Road. Today, photos of Dr. Sun and his wife together with Chinese and overseas celebrities still hang on the walls. Visitors can also see many gifts given to the couple, and many of Soong Ching-ling's effects, including a *cheongsam* made of gambiered Canton silk.

Wukang Building: A landmark of Wukang Road, this building is located at the intersection between Huaihai and Wukang. Prior to 1942, the building had no Chinese inhabitants, with most of its residents being foreign employees of Shanghai tramway and tap water companies. In 1945, the second daughter of Kung Ksiang-hsi (1880-1967, a wealthy Chinese banker and politician) bought the building. Sun Daolin, a prestigious contemporary Chinese actor, spent his last years here, and his wife still remains in the apartment which was once the bedroom of Kung's daughter.

An Old Commercial Street Almost Forgotten

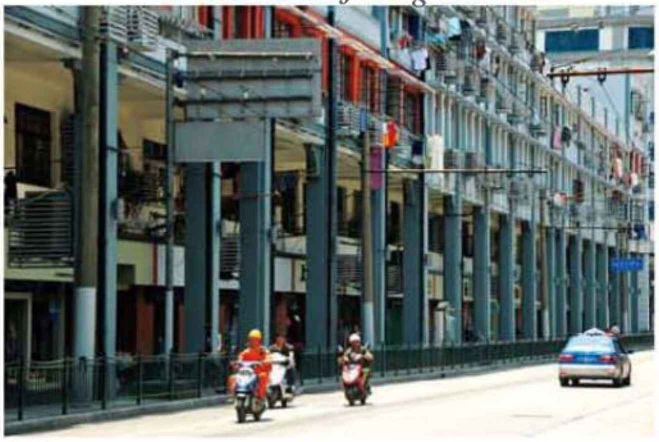
An aged commercial street almost forgotten, Jinling East Road is unique for its *qilou* (arcade houses) buildings with a distinctive Cantonese flavor. As early as the 1980s and 90s, the road remained a hot spot adjacent to the Bund: During summer holidays, it was crowded with passengers who came to buy ferry tickets to nearby coastal cities such as Ningbo and Zhoushan. Because of this, countless stores opened in the roadside *qilou*, which were connected to one another and featured signboards listing the commodities being sold. The signboards were handwritten in different styles of script.

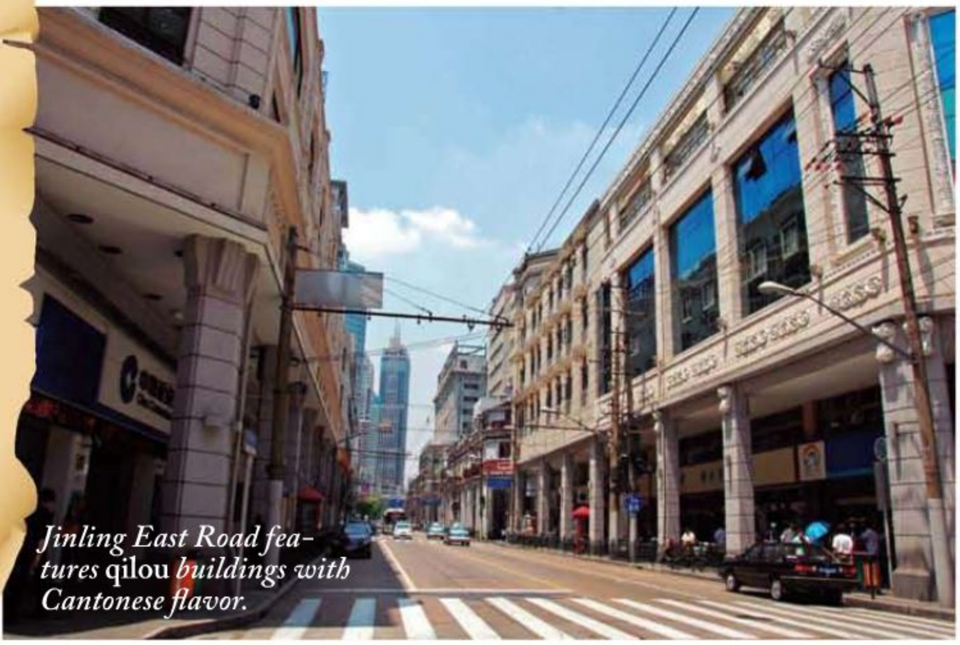
Previously, many prestigious companies chose to locate their headquarters on the more famous Nanjing Road, including Baromon Suit and Dafeng Local Products and Food Market. But they often opened branch stores on Jinling East Road. Gradually, it became a commercial street, dubbed the "Second Nanjing Road." Unfortunately, a lot of these branch stores did not receive much business, and with the coming forces of modernity, even the main stores on Nanjing Road were unable to maintain their market competitiveness. Many businesses were forced to close.

Instead, Jinling East Road began to develop into a street specializing in building and decoration materials. Nowadays, the old commercial street sees much less trade than it once did, though there are still a number of musical instrument stores doing well. Even so, the traditional *qilou* buildings along the road remind people of a once-glorious past and comprise one of Shanghai's most culturally-rich neighborhoods.

Old alleys in Shanghai not only feature traditional buildings in diverse architectural styles, but also preserve the local culture.

A view down Jinling East Road.




Jinling East Road features qilou *buildings with Cantonese flavor.*

Tips

Located in southwestern Huangpu District, Jinling East Road extends 1.4 kilometers from the Bund in the east to Tibet South Road in the west. In 1860, it became the first public road to be constructed by Shanghai's French Concession, and was initially named Consulate Road. Along with the expansion of the French Concession and the growth of the local economy, it became a bustling commercial avenue. In December 1945, it was renamed Jinling East Road.

Duhangli Alley: The history of Duhangli Alley dates back to 1932, when 25 three-story *shikumen* (a traditional architectural style unique to Shanghai) houses and 10 *qilou* buildings were constructed on both sides of the alleyway. In 1937, when Japanese invaders took over Shanghai's Zhabei and Hongkou districts, some brokerage companies moved to the alley to escape the upheaval. Local residents rented their houses to those companies to do business. This situation continued until 1958. Today, the alley has become an ideal place to experience Shanghai's unique *shikumen* lifestyle.

St. Joseph's Church: Prior to the 1920s, this Gothic-style church was the only cathedral in the Shanghai French Concession. It is open to visitors on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

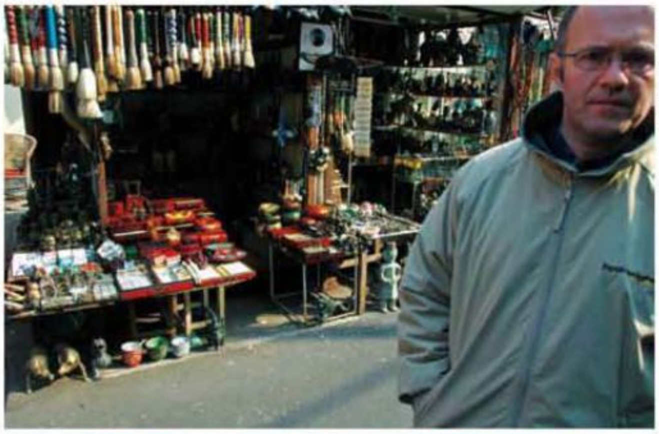
Shanghai's Antique Street

Although unfamiliar even to many Shanghai natives, a visit to Dongtai Road Antique Market is a must-do for many foreign tourists. The destination is marked on Shanghai travel maps distributed by American Airlines, Japan Airlines and other foreign airlines on their Shanghai-bound flights.

Dongtai Road was once nothing but a nondescript street until some literati began to gather there to chat over tea, and exchange antiques with each other. Gradually, the road became a gathering place for antique dealers. In the late 1980s, an antique market was set up under the sponsorship of local government.

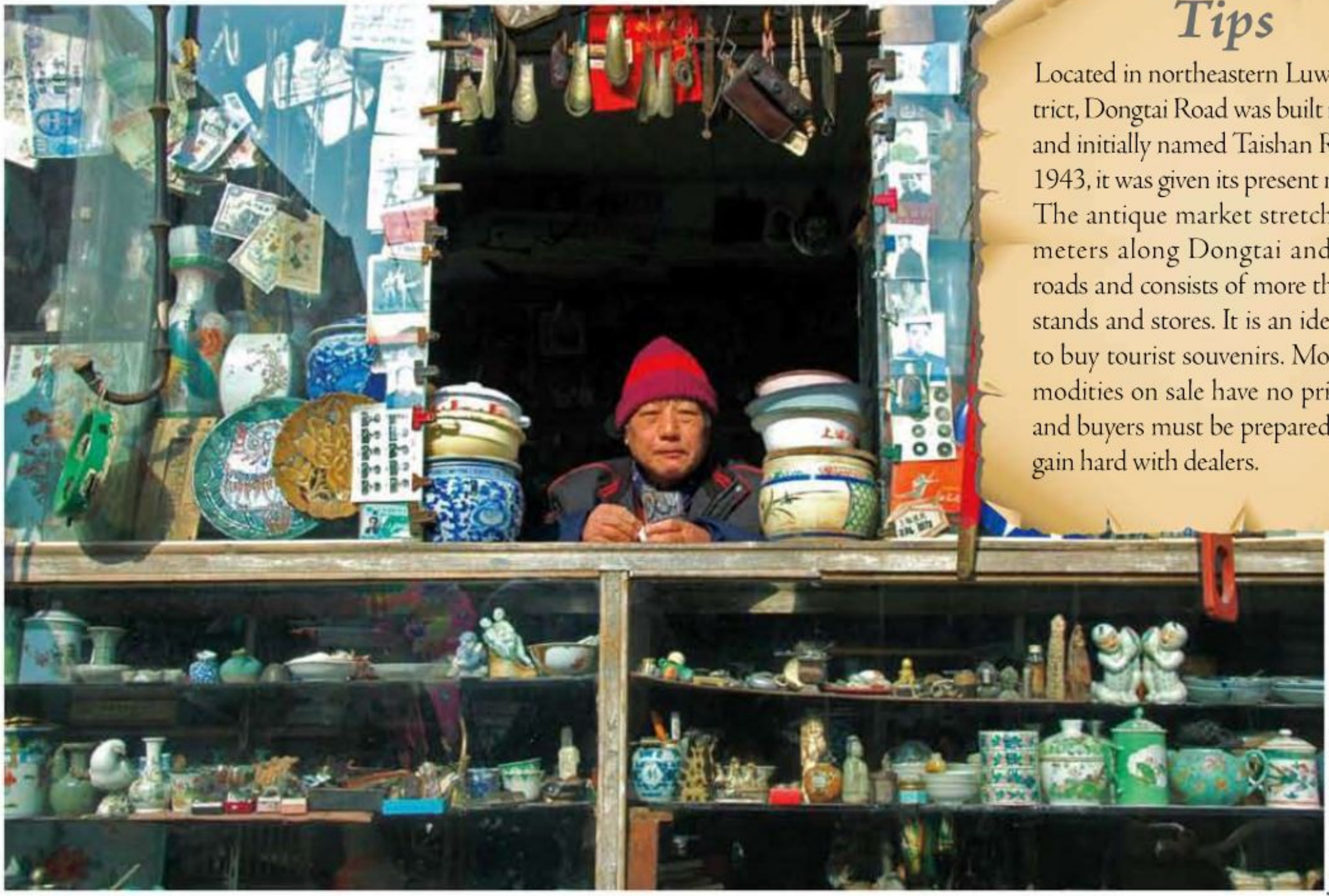
The roadside stands appear like tinplated cabins, and most of the owners are natives of Henan and Anhui provinces. Stands mainly sell craftworks, of which only a few are priceless antiques. But the craftworks on sale, such as aged printed calendars, phonographs, LP discs, old-fashioned electric fans, telephone sets, and bird cages, all display a flavor of old Shanghai. A stroll along this street can evoke a feeling of being transported back to the glamour of 1930s Shanghai.

Hidden behind the tinplated stands are stores where one can find genuine valuable antiques. The owners of these stores are all experts in antique research and collection. Dealers rarely tout for customers, but prefer to spend most of their days chatting, sunbathing or reading newspapers.



Many visitors to Dongtai Road Antique Market are foreigners who are interested in traditional Chinese culture.

Many antique dealers in Dongtai Road Antique Market are able to communicate with foreign customers in English.



Although unfamiliar to Shanghai natives, Dongtai Road Antique Market is a must-see for many foreign tourists.

Tips

Located in northeastern Luwan District, Dongtai Road was built in 1902 and initially named Taishan Road. In 1943, it was given its present name. The antique market stretches 200 meters along Dongtai and Liuhe roads and consists of more than 210 stands and stores. It is an ideal place to buy tourist souvenirs. Most commodities on sale have no price tags, and buyers must be prepared to bargain hard with dealers.

Romantic Island Getaways

Text by Liu Haile
Photographs by Lin Dihuan

Scattered across the vast ocean beyond the Pearl River estuary are more than 150 islands, including Dong'ao, Miaowan and Outer Lingding, collectively known as the Wanshan Archipelago. Historically, these islands served as natural fortifications protecting South China from foreign invasion by the sea, but now they have become popular holiday destinations. During summer vacations, tourists flood the islands to sample the sights and the cleansing sea breeze.

Dong'ao Island

Today, Dong'ao Island is a tranquil fishing harbor. At dusk, fishing vessels return to anchor there. Wisps of smoke can be seen curling from kitchen chimneys in the village on the shore. Such a scene is timeless, and has changed little over the centuries.

Historically, the island served as an offshore defense outside the Pearl River estuary. Antiquated castles still remain, as well as beacon towers which would signal impending invasion. There are also many cultural ruins, including stone carvings and steles dating back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Dong'ao Fort, an impressive military fortification, also still stands on the island. It was built in 1729, more than a century before the First Opium War (1840-1842). During the Qing Dynasty, it was home to 50 soldiers whose job was to keep lookout for any potential invaders. Its stone walls were reinforced with sticky rice, and despite nearly 300 years of weathering, they remain formidable. The fort measures 20 meters from west to east, and 45 meters from north to south. Two emplacements are equipped at the north and south ends of its east wall, respectively. A cone-shaped beacon tower stands two meters tall atop a cliff. The beacon tower is equipped with a fire chamber and a chimney, which were used for military communication in ancient times.

Though equipped for warfare, the island now basks in peace and tranquility. White clouds float in azure sky, while green hills and deep blue seawater complete the painting. Along with picturesque landscapes, the area also hosts plentiful historic relics. Visitors can enjoy both colorful vistas and a deep connection with the past.

The island's Nansha Bay features soft, white sandy beaches, which make it a paradise for swimmers. Many other aquatic activities are available, including motorboating, canoeing, sailing, and diving. As the tide wanes, beachcombers like to search for shells and crabs left behind.

After a day's adventure amidst the island's oceanic wonders and dense forests, tourists can enjoy a seafood banquet at a hotel or restaurant. There is far more than just a wonderful sea breeze on this colorful, romantic island.

Angling is a popular way to relax and enjoy the ocean, and the likelihood of a catch is very high.

Tips:

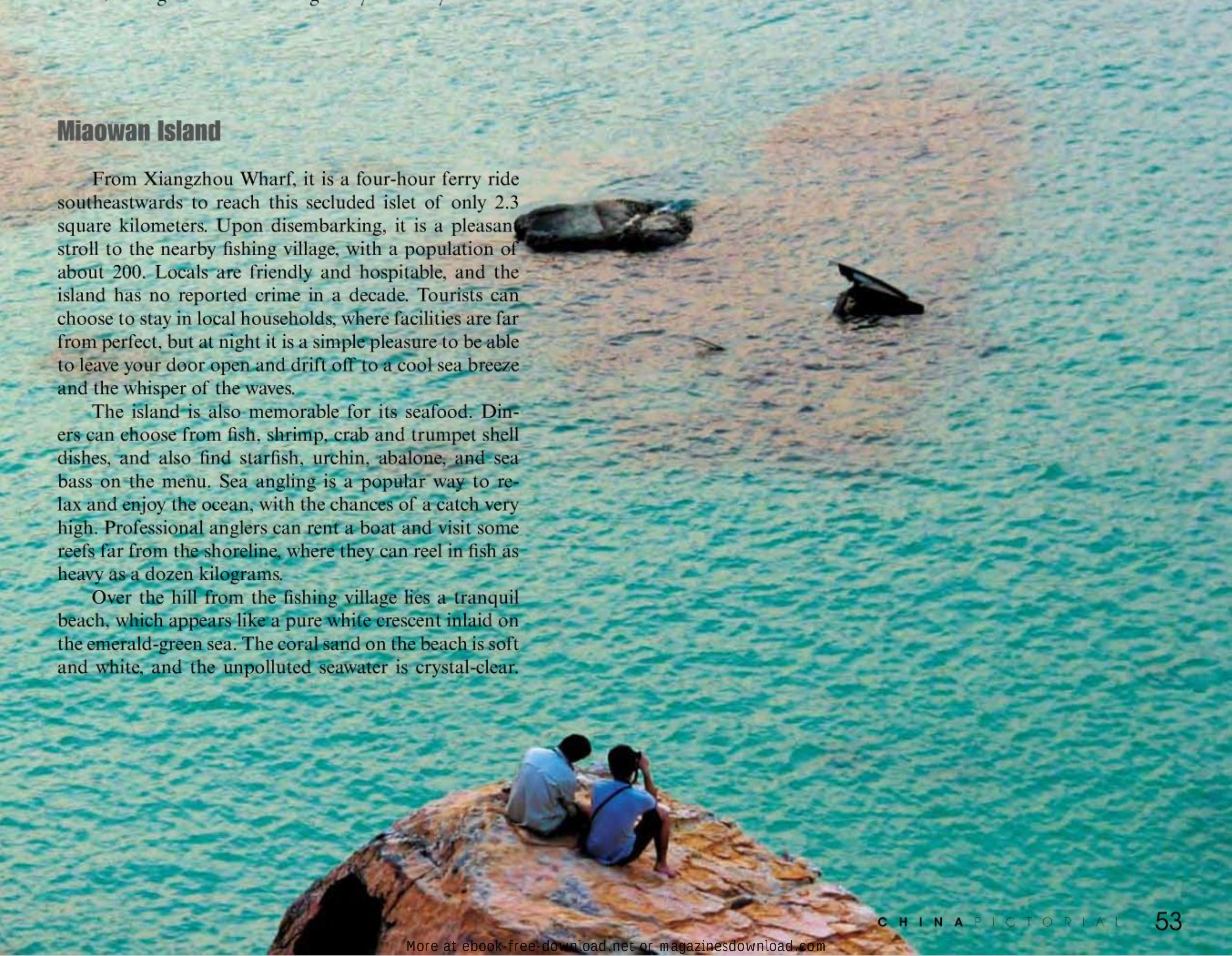
Dong'ao Island is part of the Wanshan Archipelago of Zhuhai City, in southern China's Guangdong Province. Daily ferries shuttle between the island and Xiangzhou Wharf in urban Zhuhai. A single trip takes about an hour. The island features many restaurants and accommodation options. It also boasts a well-preserved ecosystem, with 82 percent of its land area covered by forests, making it an ideal weekend getaway for nearby residents.

Miaowan Island

From Xiangzhou Wharf, it is a four-hour ferry ride southeastwards to reach this secluded islet of only 2.3 square kilometers. Upon disembarking, it is a pleasant stroll to the nearby fishing village, with a population of about 200. Locals are friendly and hospitable, and the island has no reported crime in a decade. Tourists can choose to stay in local households, where facilities are far from perfect, but at night it is a simple pleasure to be able to leave your door open and drift off to a cool sea breeze and the whisper of the waves.

The island is also memorable for its seafood. Diners can choose from fish, shrimp, crab and trumpet shell dishes, and also find starfish, urchin, abalone, and sea bass on the menu. Sea angling is a popular way to relax and enjoy the ocean, with the chances of a catch very high. Professional anglers can rent a boat and visit some reefs far from the shoreline, where they can reel in fish as heavy as a dozen kilograms.

Over the hill from the fishing village lies a tranquil beach, which appears like a pure white crescent inlaid on the emerald-green sea. The coral sand on the beach is soft and white, and the unpolluted seawater is crystal-clear.

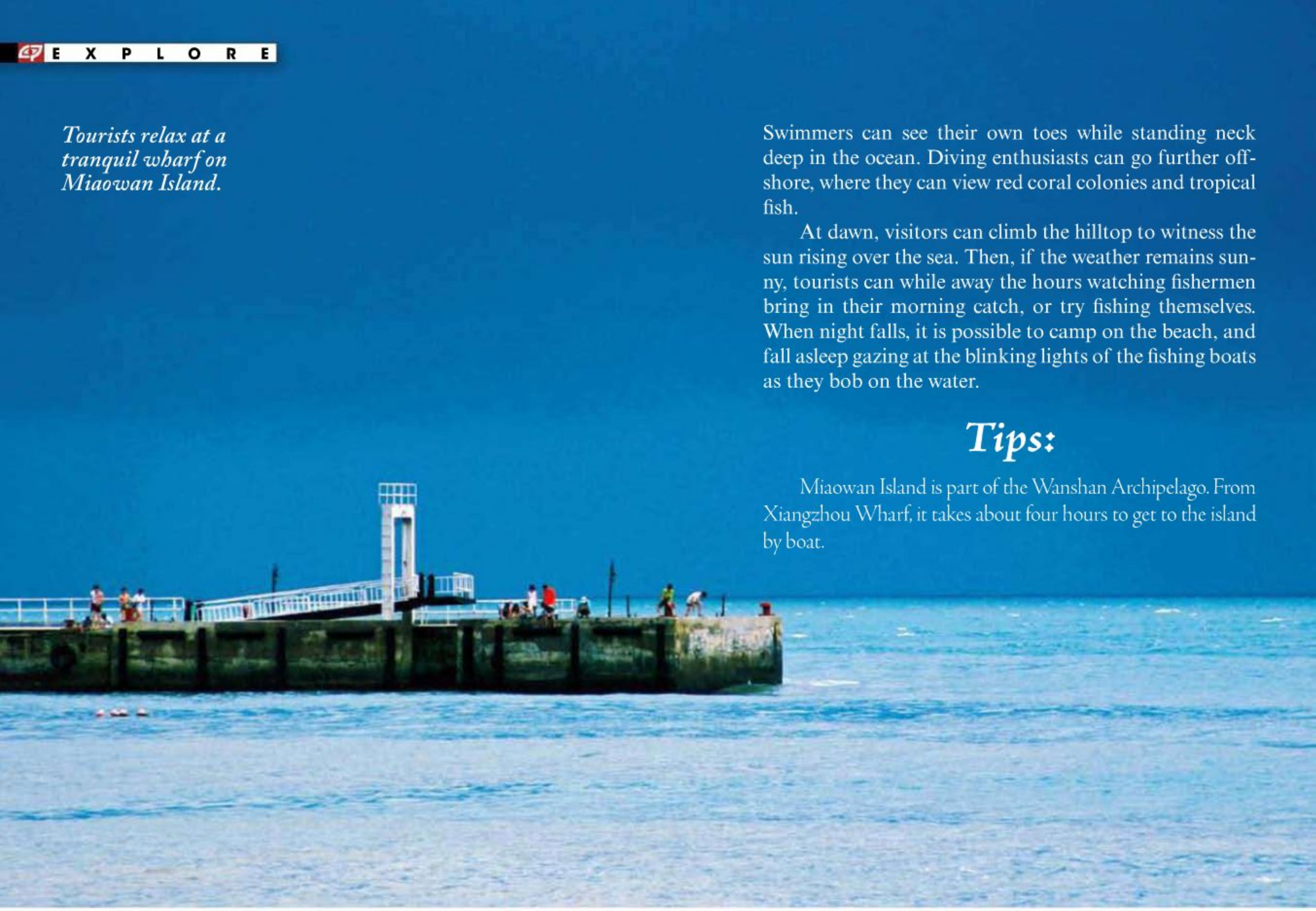


Swimmers can see their own toes while standing neck deep in the ocean. Diving enthusiasts can go further offshore, where they can view red coral colonies and tropical fish.

At dawn, visitors can climb the hilltop to witness the sun rising over the sea. Then, if the weather remains sunny, tourists can while away the hours watching fishermen bring in their morning catch, or try fishing themselves. When night falls, it is possible to camp on the beach, and fall asleep gazing at the blinking lights of the fishing boats as they bob on the water.

Tips:

Miaowan Island is part of the Wanshan Archipelago. From Xiangzhou Wharf, it takes about four hours to get to the island by boat.



Tourists relax at a tranquil wharf on Miaowan Island.

In the setting sun, fishermen head home with a good catch.

As the tide wanes, beachcombers often search for shells and crabs left on the shore.

Dried fish adds a distinctive aroma to the fishing wharf.

Women prepare fishing nets on the wharf.

Outer Lingding Island

Outer Lingding Island is likely unfamiliar even to most Chinese. But whenever Lingding Sea is mentioned, history buffs will think of Wen Tianxiang, a Southern Song (1127-1279) national hero who organized a resistance against the invasion of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). After being captured by the Yuan troops, he refused to surrender despite bribery and torture. On the way to Yuan prison, he wrote a famous poem, *Passing Lingding Sea*, expressing his wish that he would rather die than surrender his honor. Outer Lingding Island is located right on Lingding Sea.

Outer Lingding Island is very small, with an area of 4.23 square kilometers. Its main peak stands only 311.8 meters above sea level. It is more notable for its many picturesque bays, enthralling landscapes, and interesting rock formations. Some reefs resemble human figures or animals, of which the most famous are the Sea-Watching Rock and the Peacock Rock.

Adjacent to Hong Kong, the island enjoys a favorable geographical location and abounds in tourist attractions. Because of this, it has witnessed a rapid development in its tourism industry and become a well-known holiday destination in recent years. The island is equipped with holiday villages, hotels, nightclubs, and food streets. Dadong Bay features soft sand and clear waters, and is an ideal place for angling, swimming, and surfing.

Outer Lingding Island is also famous for three kinds of seafood: goose barnacles, black abalones, and sea urchins, which are together known as the "three treasures of Lingding."

Tips:

Located in Dangan Town, Wanshan District, Outer Lingding Island lies 27.5 nautical miles west of urban Zhuhai and only six nautical miles north of Hong Kong's Cheung Chau Island. From Zhuhai's Xiangzhou Wharf, it takes about an hour to the island by ferry.

DANCING TO THE STARS

Text and photographs by Jennifer Chen

Just a few years ago,
Nanzhang was nothing but a nondescript,
underdeveloped county hidden in the mountainous
area of Hunan Province.
But these days, it is a renowned destination for
millennium-old folk performances.
These include the Shaman Dance,
believed to be a form of communication with the gods;
Juzhang Music,
used to pray for blessings at weddings or funerals;
the Donggong Stilt Dance,
featuring antics and tricks;
and the Farmer's Gong and Drum characterized by
impromptu comic performances.
These folk art forms,
forged amidst the struggle between man and nature,
combine bold imagination with tender romance,
and have maintained an incredible vitality
over the past 3,000 years
in the villages hidden deep in the craggy
Jingshan Mountains.

The Shaman Dance dates back 3,000 years, and it is believed that its performers can communicate with gods.

Hidden deep in the mountains, Nanzhang still preserves many fortified villages, where folk heritage has been handed down from generation to generation.

Shaman Dance

Typically, a Shaman Dance begins with the beating of gongs. Under the gaze of spectators from neighboring villages, an old shaman in his 70s, wearing a five-Buddha crown, a yellow robe and a pair of handmade cloth shoes, begins to dance to the singing of his four partners. The shaman performs various moves: Circling while holding a fan and a drum in his hands; bowing to a flag embroidered with the Eight Diagrams; and dancing while waving an axe or a sword. Despite the complicated steps, his pace remains rhythmic. At the height of the performance, his sonorous singing resounds in the air.

In a dilapidated house in Xuejiaping Village, Nanzhang County's Xueping Town, Qin's Troupe performs one such Shaman Dance. The shaman's portrait and various ritual instruments are laid out in the center of the stage, while the backdrop is painted with dragon and phoenix totems as well as suns, moons, stars and fire. It is not easy for a village to be granted a visit from the famous Qin's Troupe to perform the dance. In addition to a considerable fee, the village must also prove that its hosts are "noble and virtuous."

As the performers dance onstage, an old woman carrying a baby in her arms squeezes through the crowd, trying to get a closer look. She perhaps believes that some of the ritual's good fortune will rub off on her and her granddaughter. But some little girls are frightened by the weird, dark atmosphere of the performance, and choose to run away.

To dazzle the audience, various tricks are used in Nanzhang folk music performance.

The Shaman Dance originally derived from the royal palace dance of the Chu State which dates back over 2,000 years to the Warring States Period (475-221BC). Following the collapse of the Chu, the dance adapted its style, drawing on the agricultural traditions of ordinary farmers to become a popular folk art. People performed the Shaman Dance to celebrate harvest, pray for luck, worship gods, or to release the souls of the dead. Various kinds of ritual instruments were involved in the performance, such as hierograms, joss paper, divine sticks, and ghost masks, as well as flags used to call back the spirit of the dead. Some believed that the performers used these instruments to connect with the underworld. The Shaman Dance can certainly appear strange to the uninitiated, and it was once considered a kind of heresy by many modern observers.

"My grandfather, Qin Yingkai, has long served as a shaman in Xueping Town," recalls 37-year-old Qin Dawu, current head of Qin's Troupe. "In the past, he had to burn many old scripts to avoid being accused of promoting superstition." Today, this situation has changed. Local villages often invite Qin's Troupe to perform on important occasions. Moreover, folklorists have carefully compiled choreographic scripts based on their performances, which total more than 200,000 words. The Shaman Dance is now protected as an intangible cultural heritage of China.

Juzhang Music

Deep in the Jingshan Mountains, Liu Guozhang, head of Liujiashan Village's Juzhang Musical Troupe, unpacks a bag containing dozens of musical instruments handed down from antiquity. The Juzhang Music performance primarily involves wind and percussion instruments, including trombones, *suona* (a woodwind instrument), drums, gongs, and cymbals. Such equipment usually guarantees joyful, celebratory music. But the style of Juzhang is a little different, bringing with it a sense of foreboding. "All of the instruments are handed down from our ancestors," Liu explains. "Each one is unique since no one knows how to make them now. Some people tried reproductions, but the copies were never as good as the originals."

"At the temple fairs held during the Spring Festival, all Juzhang Music troupes gather in Fancheng to compete with each other, and our troupe always receives the biggest audience," Liu declares with pride. A performer's skills are tested by his trumpet blowing ability. With cheeks puffed, the trumpeter circularly breathes through his nose, allowing him to blow continuously for hours at a time. Shows also feature dual trumpeters, who blow their own trumpets while controlling the valves of their partner's. Perhaps the most interesting part of a performance is the gong throwing. Two performers throw their gongs high into the air and then catch them before they hit the ground. They don't just throw the gongs casually, but do so to the beat of the rhythm of the trumpets. While traveling through the air, the gongs generate a melodic whistle.

The plaque hanging on the wall of Liu's house reads

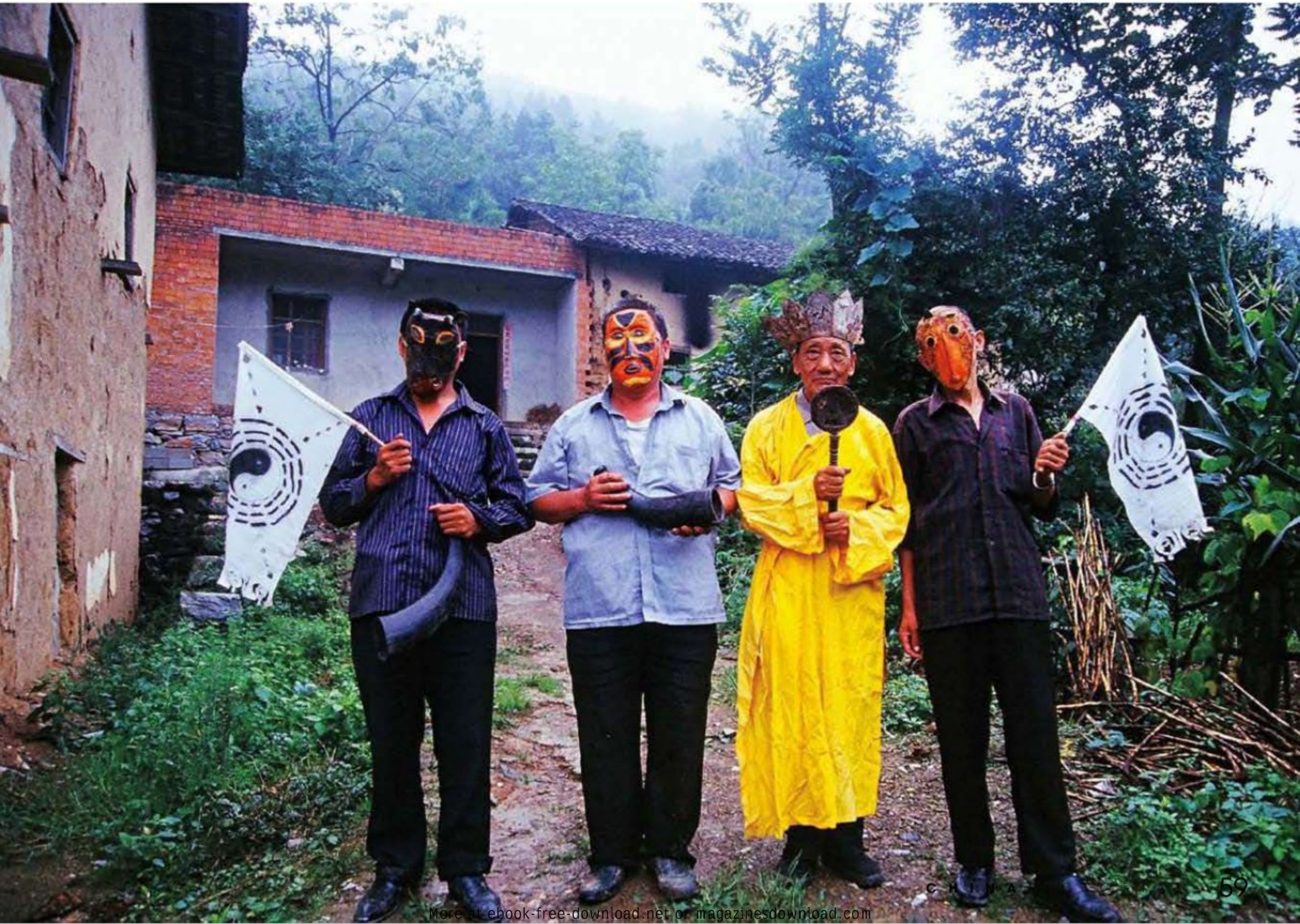
"Tobacco Plantation Model," and indicates that the family once made a living growing tobacco. The revenues from performing Juzhang Music were just additional income. In 1990, Liu went to the county seat of Nanzhang, where he and his wife started a shoe business. So far, they have opened three stores, and are able to comfortably support their family. Still, in his spare time, Liu often returns to his village to perform Juzhang Music.

But due to the rapid modernization of China, ancient Juzhang Music, which has existed for nearly 3,000 years, is on the verge of extinction. "Two of my brothers can perform the folk art like me, but only one in the next generation knows how to blow a trumpet," Liu sighs, pointing at 18-year-old Liu Chenshan standing nearby.

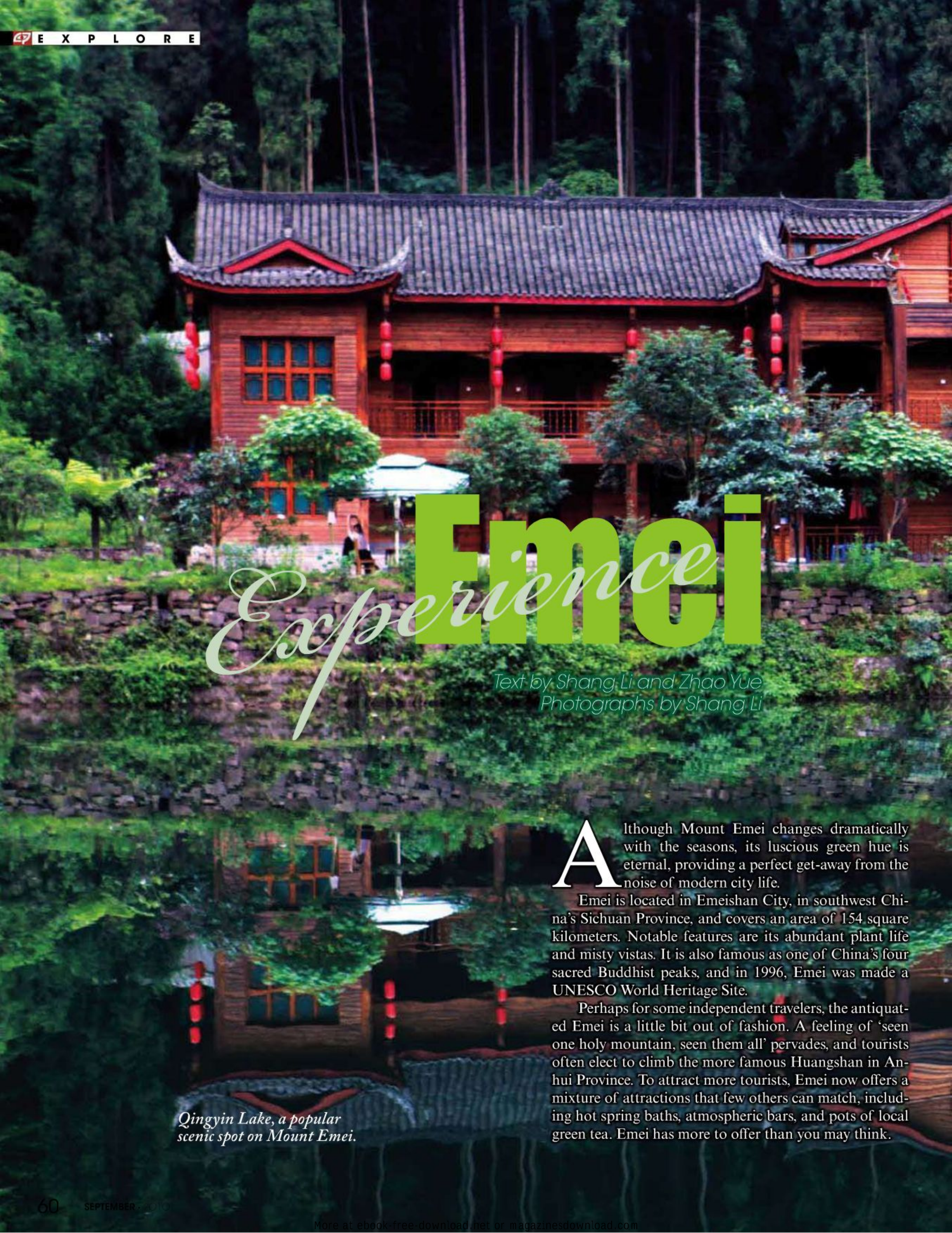
"In the past, I didn't recognize how precious Juzhang Music was," Liu continues. "In recent years, many researchers came to me to learn about the traditional art. I decided to perform once again." Over the past two years, Liu has dedicated himself to promoting the ancient style, enlisting the help of renowned professors to compile a repertoire of Juzhang Music, and traveling to various cities inviting various folklorists to take photos and record the music of his troupe. He also plans to build a website to recruit new students. His ultimate goal is to help the folk art apply for "intangible cultural heritage" status. Liu has made up his mind to devote the rest of his life to the spread of Juzhang Music.

In addition to the Shaman Dance and Juzhang Music, Nanzhang has many other cultural curiosities, including the Grass-Filtered Wine Dance, Donggong Stilt Dance, Zhanghe Fish Lanterns, Manhe Farmer's Song, and Farmer's Gong and Drum. Over thousands of years, these folk art forms have enriched a sense of community for local people.

Musical instruments used in the Shaman Dance.



Performers who wear masks play gods in folk shows.



Qingyin Lake, a popular scenic spot on Mount Emei.

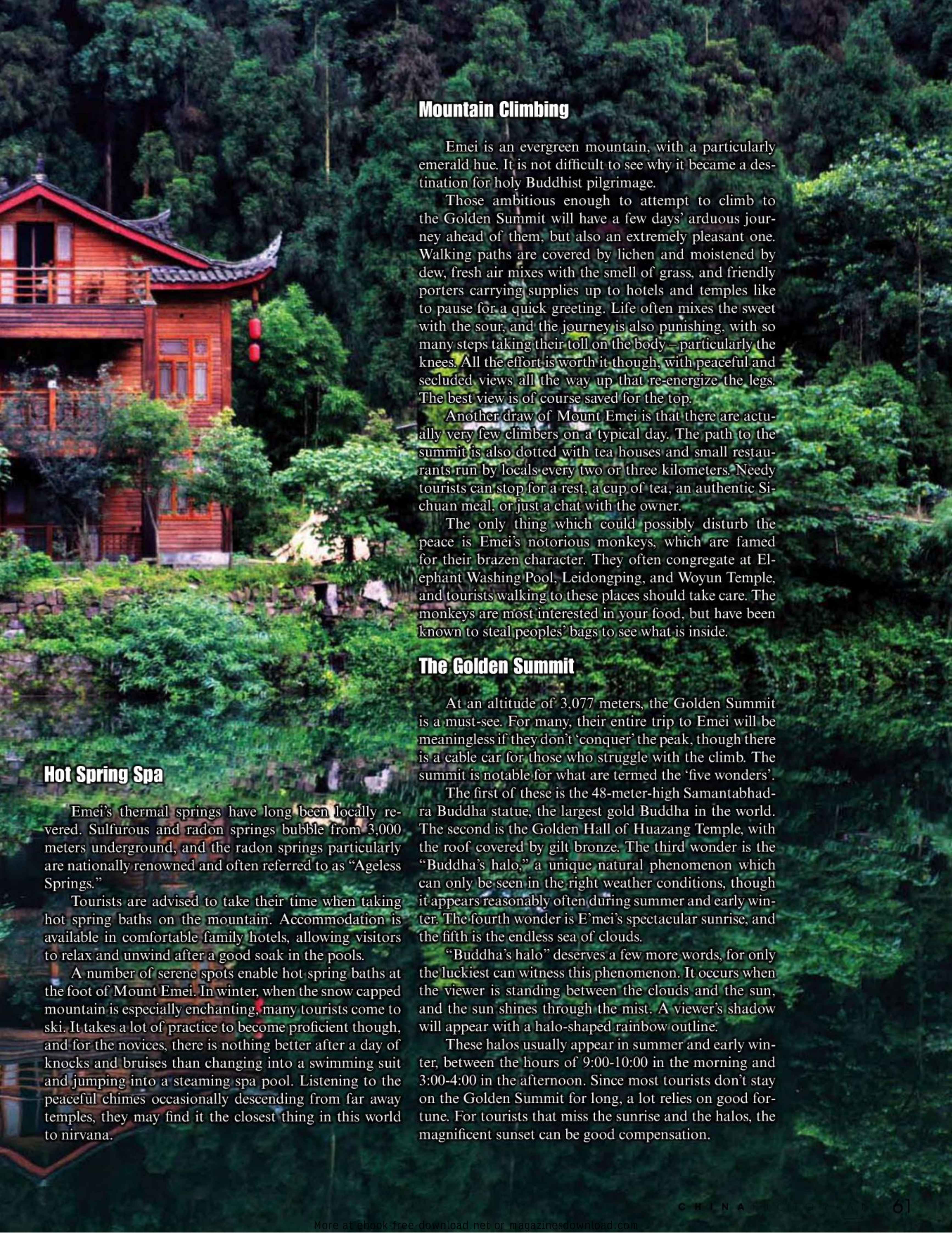
Experience Emei

Text by Shang Li and Zhao Yue
Photographs by Shang Li

Although Mount Emei changes dramatically with the seasons, its luscious green hue is eternal, providing a perfect get-away from the noise of modern city life.

Emei is located in Emeishan City, in southwest China's Sichuan Province, and covers an area of 154 square kilometers. Notable features are its abundant plant life and misty vistas. It is also famous as one of China's four sacred Buddhist peaks, and in 1996, Emei was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Perhaps for some independent travelers, the antiquated Emei is a little bit out of fashion. A feeling of 'seen one holy mountain, seen them all' pervades, and tourists often elect to climb the more famous Huangshan in Anhui Province. To attract more tourists, Emei now offers a mixture of attractions that few others can match, including hot spring baths, atmospheric bars, and pots of local green tea. Emei has more to offer than you may think.



Hot Spring Spa

Emei's thermal springs have long been locally revered. Sulfurous and radon springs bubble from 3,000 meters underground, and the radon springs particularly are nationally renowned and often referred to as "Ageless Springs."

Tourists are advised to take their time when taking hot spring baths on the mountain. Accommodation is available in comfortable family hotels, allowing visitors to relax and unwind after a good soak in the pools.

A number of serene spots enable hot spring baths at the foot of Mount Emei. In winter, when the snow capped mountain is especially enchanting, many tourists come to ski. It takes a lot of practice to become proficient though, and for the novices, there is nothing better after a day of knocks and bruises than changing into a swimming suit and jumping into a steaming spa pool. Listening to the peaceful chimes occasionally descending from far away temples, they may find it the closest thing in this world to nirvana.

Mountain Climbing

Emei is an evergreen mountain, with a particularly emerald hue. It is not difficult to see why it became a destination for holy Buddhist pilgrimage.

Those ambitious enough to attempt to climb to the Golden Summit will have a few days' arduous journey ahead of them, but also an extremely pleasant one. Walking paths are covered by lichen and moistened by dew, fresh air mixes with the smell of grass, and friendly porters carrying supplies up to hotels and temples like to pause for a quick greeting. Life often mixes the sweet with the sour, and the journey is also punishing, with so many steps taking their toll on the body – particularly the knees. All the effort is worth it though, with peaceful and secluded views all the way up that re-energize the legs. The best view is of course saved for the top.

Another draw of Mount Emei is that there are actually very few climbers on a typical day. The path to the summit is also dotted with tea houses and small restaurants run by locals every two or three kilometers. Needy tourists can stop for a rest, a cup of tea, an authentic Sichuan meal, or just a chat with the owner.

The only thing which could possibly disturb the peace is Emei's notorious monkeys, which are famed for their brazen character. They often congregate at Elephant Washing Pool, Leidongping, and Woyun Temple, and tourists walking to these places should take care. The monkeys are most interested in your food, but have been known to steal peoples' bags to see what is inside.

The Golden Summit

At an altitude of 3,077 meters, the Golden Summit is a must-see. For many, their entire trip to Emei will be meaningless if they don't 'conquer' the peak, though there is a cable car for those who struggle with the climb. The summit is notable for what are termed the 'five wonders'.

The first of these is the 48-meter-high Samantabhadra Buddha statue, the largest gold Buddha in the world. The second is the Golden Hall of Huazang Temple, with the roof covered by gilt bronze. The third wonder is the "Buddha's halo," a unique natural phenomenon which can only be seen in the right weather conditions, though it appears reasonably often during summer and early winter. The fourth wonder is E'mei's spectacular sunrise, and the fifth is the endless sea of clouds.

"Buddha's halo" deserves a few more words, for only the luckiest can witness this phenomenon. It occurs when the viewer is standing between the clouds and the sun, and the sun shines through the mist. A viewer's shadow will appear with a halo-shaped rainbow outline.

These halos usually appear in summer and early winter, between the hours of 9:00-10:00 in the morning and 3:00-4:00 in the afternoon. Since most tourists don't stay on the Golden Summit for long, a lot relies on good fortune. For tourists that miss the sunrise and the halos, the magnificent sunset can be good compensation.

The Samantabhadra Buddha statue at the Golden Summit.

Living beside a temple.

Food, Drink and Pubs

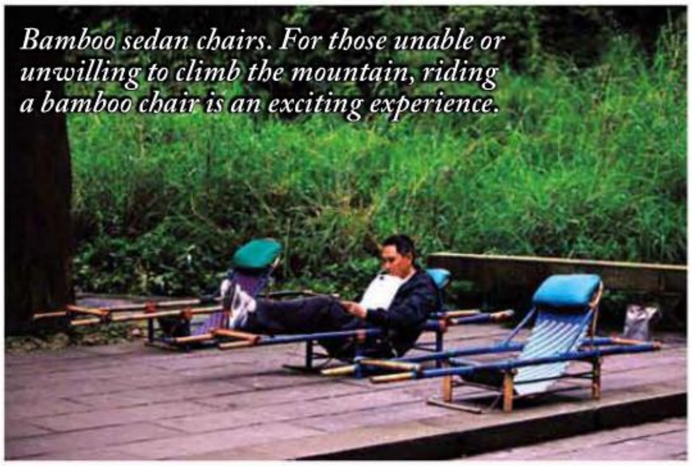
In terms of food, Emei boasts many enjoyable eats. From roadside snacks to formal Sichuan dishes, Sichuan people are notable across China for their varied cuisine. Tourists can enjoy an 'Emei Health Boosting Dinner', spicy Sichuan snacks, and vegetarian food provided by the many temples.

Vegetarian dishes are mainly made from flour, bean products, and rice noodles. Fuhu, Baoguo, and Wannian Temples all offer delicious yet inexpensive vegetarian food.

But tourists really shouldn't miss the Sichuan cuisine. Known for its spicy flavor, Sichuan food, including hot-pot, cold noodles in sauce, and rice noodles with chili, is a big part of the Emei experience.

After an excellent meal, the next priority is usually relaxation. Sichuan is in fact famous for its idleness. Locals are experts at kicking back and taking their time to enjoy the good things in life. The "leisure index" of Emei can be said to be the equal of backpacking hotspots like Lijiang, Dali, or anywhere else for that matter.

Emei Snow Bud, a precious green tea, is cultivated at an altitude of 800 to 1,200 meters on the mountain. The pristine environment has bestowed on the tea an elegant taste and a beautiful color. It is difficult to improve on a relaxing cup of tea, listening to the sound of floating rivers, playing cards, chatting with new friends, or simply letting time amble past. Emei is the perfect retreat, no matter the season.



Bamboo sedan chairs. For those unable or unwilling to climb the mountain, riding a bamboo chair is an exciting experience.

Relaxing in a hot spring.

Travel Tips:

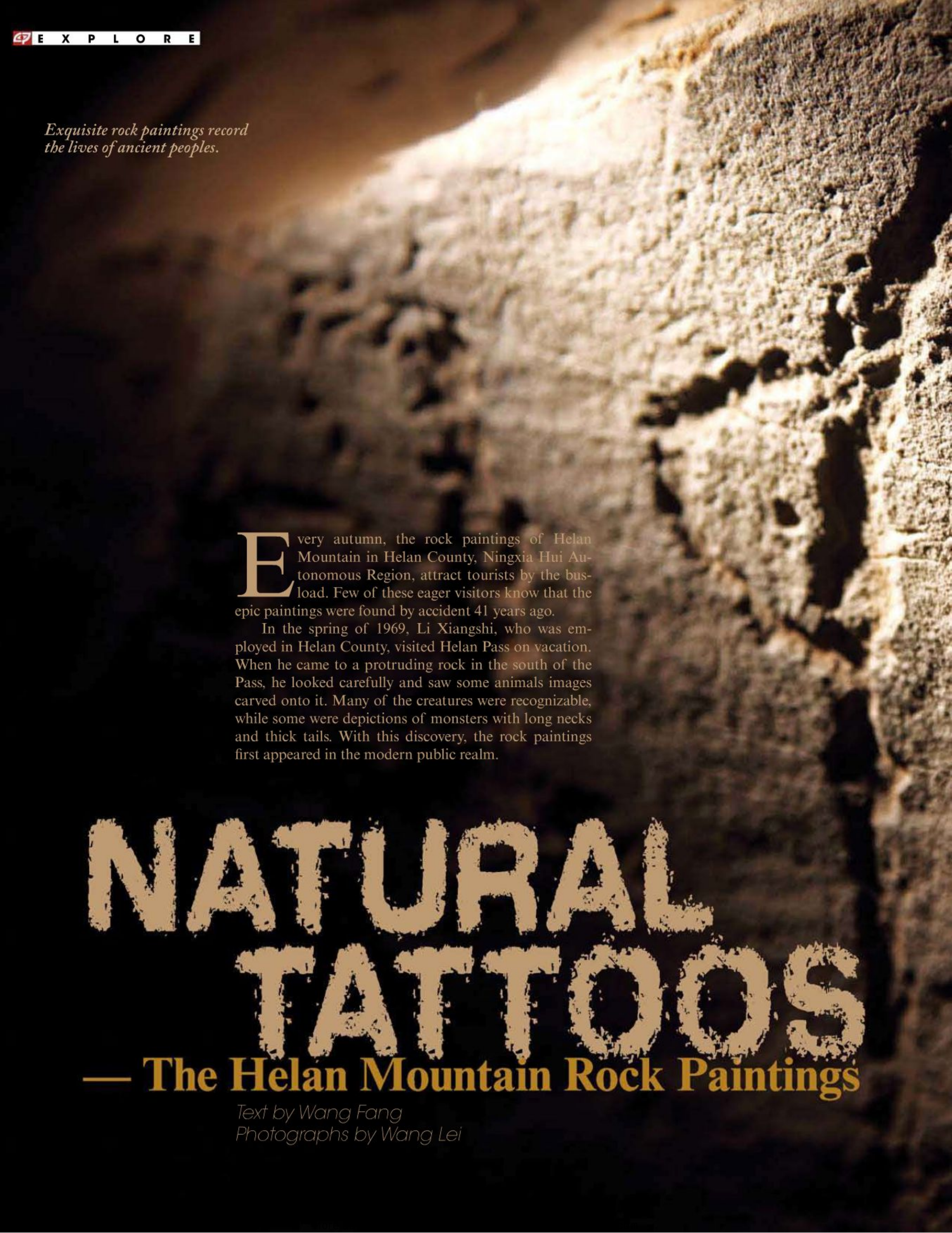
Transportation: Direct buses to Mount Emei leave Xinnanmen Station, Chengdu, every 30 minutes, and a one-way ticket costs 43 yuan.

Accommodation: Both star-rated hotels and youth hostels can be found in the scenic area. Teddy Bear Hotel, located in No.43 Baoguo Temple Scenic Zone, is strongly recommended by several quality guidebooks, including ***Lonely Planet***. The manager is a local, and is happy to offer travel suggestions.

Specialties: Organic tea, souvenirs with Emei monkey designs, ginger sugars.

Admission: 150 yuan per person during peak season, and 90 yuan during off season (December 15 to January 14).

Shuangfei Pavilion amidst the trees.



Exquisite rock paintings record the lives of ancient peoples.

NATURAL TATTOOS

— The Helan Mountain Rock Paintings

Text by Wang Fang
Photographs by Wang Lei

Every autumn, the rock paintings of Helan Mountain in Helan County, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, attract tourists by the busload. Few of these eager visitors know that the epic paintings were found by accident 41 years ago.

In the spring of 1969, Li Xiangshi, who was employed in Helan County, visited Helan Pass on vacation. When he came to a protruding rock in the south of the Pass, he looked carefully and saw some animals images carved onto it. Many of the creatures were recognizable, while some were depictions of monsters with long necks and thick tails. With this discovery, the rock paintings first appeared in the modern public realm.

The Earliest Record of Human Beings

Rocks are the oldest painting canvases in the world. Since antiquity, people around the globe carved and drew on rocks to record their lives and wishes. These images are our most important clue to understanding the lives of the past, before the invention of the written word.

Helan Mountain, 250 kilometers long and 15-30 kilometers wide, is one of the few north-to-south mountains in China. Rock paintings are scattered across approximately 30 passes on the eastern side, with some also to be found on the desert steppe to the front – a bounty of more than 20,000 drawings from varying periods. They record scenes of grazing, hunting, sacrificing and other common activities of a people who lived 3,000 to 10,000 years ago, and include some abstract symbols and animal images such as horses, tigers and leopards.

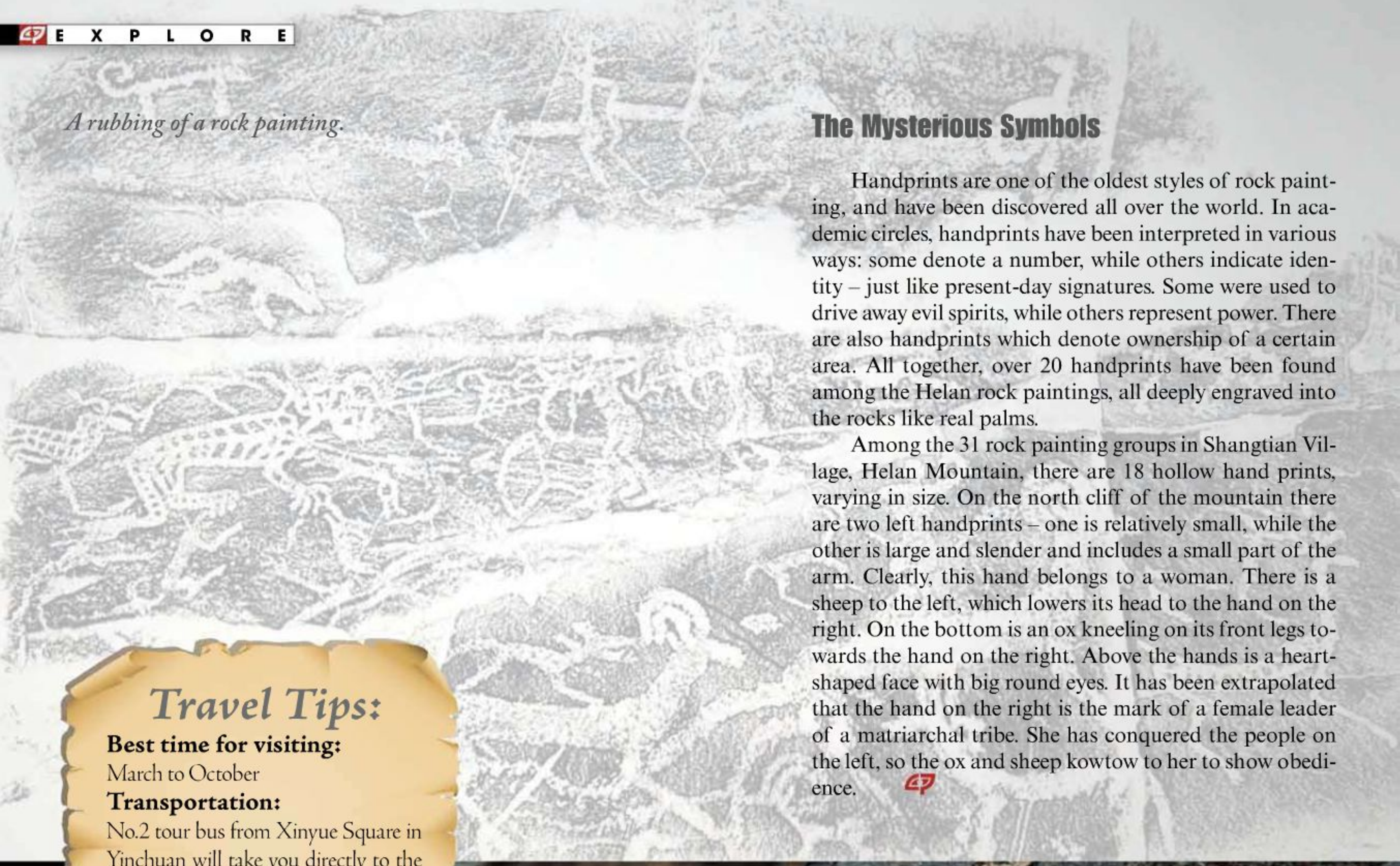
Among these passes, the Helan Pass is outstanding due to the quantity and quality of the paintings. Interpreting various clues, experts speculate that the pass used to be a place where prehistoric people conducted sacrificial rites. On the valley cliffs covering less than 1 square kilometer lie eight human-face rock painting groups. Different groups have different composition styles and manifestations. Experts believe they were created to worship a god by different tribes at different periods.

The God of the Sun

According to He Jide, former director of the Management Department of Helan Rock Painting, of worldwide rock painting systems, depictions of human faces often centralize in the Pacific Rim, in 11 countries that have that kind of drawing. But Helan Mountain, very far from this region, possesses nearly 1,000 human-face rock paintings, making it something of an outlier.

The most famous face painting is one carved on the sun-facing rock – named "the God of the Sun" and located over 20 meters above the ground. With lines radiating outward above, the face is round, and the eyes have double pupils and long eyelashes. The figure looks intimidating, but also noble. Researchers believe it depicts the God of the Sun, worshipped by ancient nomads. In ancient times, people believed a good harvest to be a blessing from powerful spirits above. In the event of a poor harvest, which left people inadequate food and clothes, they imagined they had angered the gods. Since the sun is beyond other celestial bodies and presides over the whole world, ancient people often believed it to be the most powerful.

After a careful examination of the painting, experts noticed that the god has 24 light beams and 12 hairs. Each eye has six eyelashes. The figures seem to embody the locals' understanding of time: solar terms, months and years. The God of the Sun and other paintings can shed light on ancient peoples' mysterious relationship to the cosmos.



A rubbing of a rock painting.

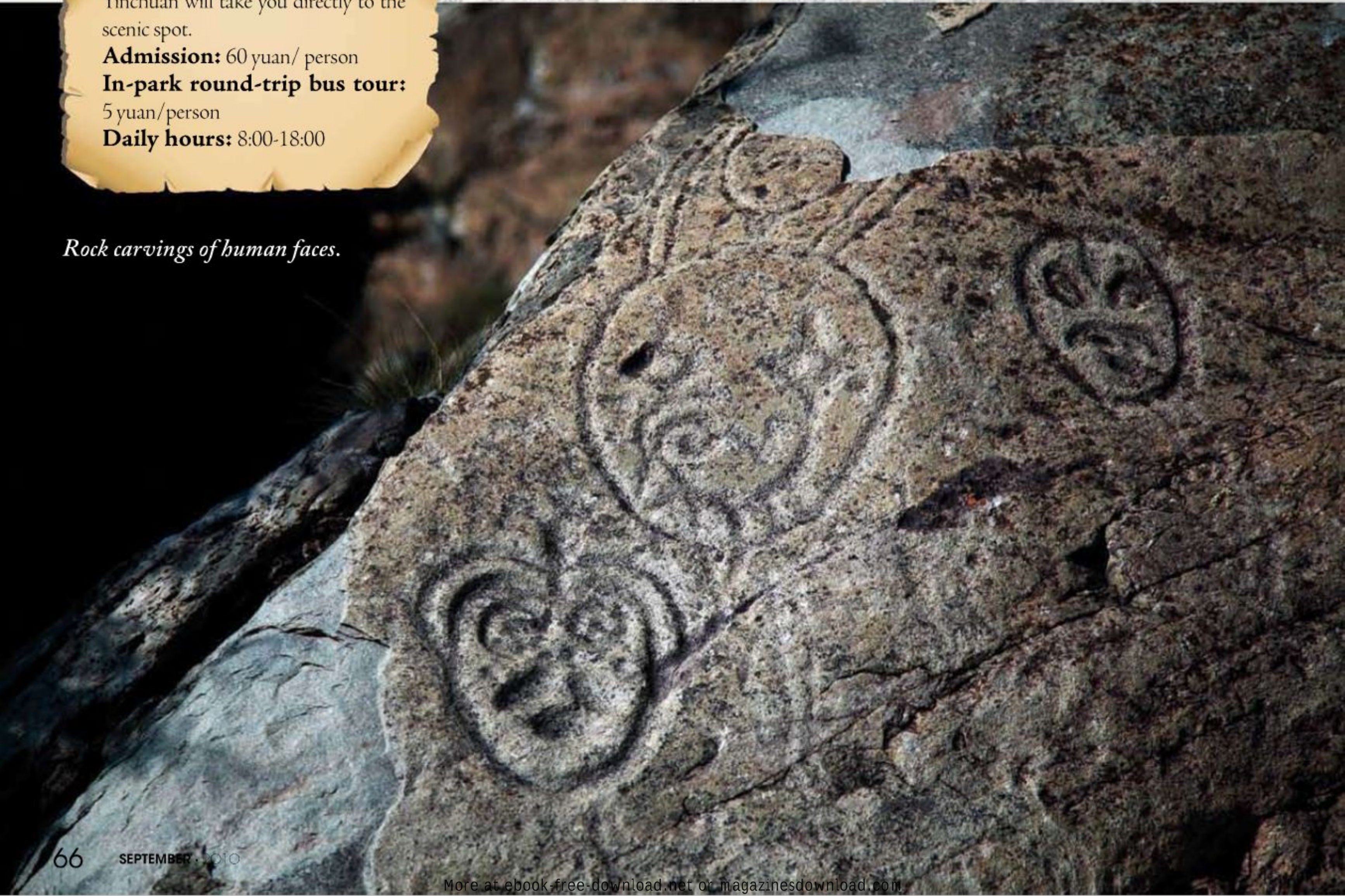
The Mysterious Symbols

Handprints are one of the oldest styles of rock painting, and have been discovered all over the world. In academic circles, handprints have been interpreted in various ways: some denote a number, while others indicate identity – just like present-day signatures. Some were used to drive away evil spirits, while others represent power. There are also handprints which denote ownership of a certain area. All together, over 20 handprints have been found among the Helan rock paintings, all deeply engraved into the rocks like real palms.

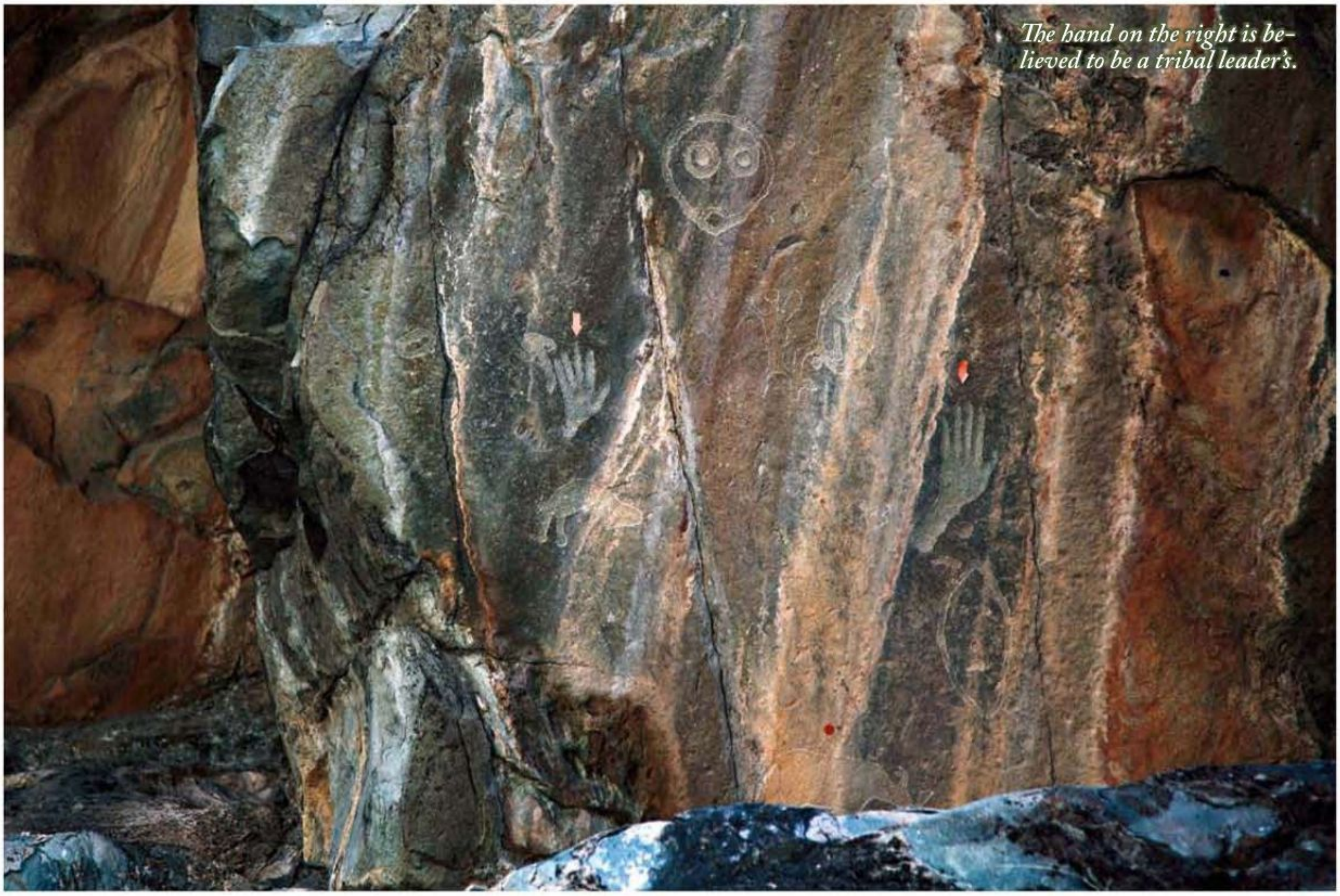
Among the 31 rock painting groups in Shangtian Village, Helan Mountain, there are 18 hollow hand prints, varying in size. On the north cliff of the mountain there are two left handprints – one is relatively small, while the other is large and slender and includes a small part of the arm. Clearly, this hand belongs to a woman. There is a sheep to the left, which lowers its head to the hand on the right. On the bottom is an ox kneeling on its front legs towards the hand on the right. Above the hands is a heart-shaped face with big round eyes. It has been extrapolated that the hand on the right is the mark of a female leader of a matriarchal tribe. She has conquered the people on the left, so the ox and sheep kowtow to her to show obedience.

Travel Tips:

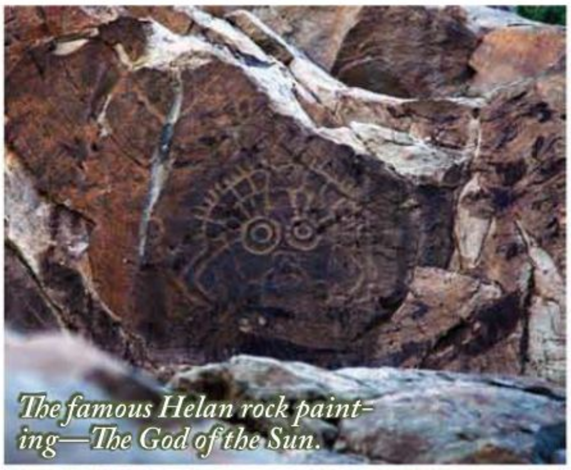
Best time for visiting:
March to October
Transportation:
No.2 tour bus from Xinyue Square in Yinchuan will take you directly to the scenic spot.
Admission: 60 yuan/ person
In-park round-trip bus tour:
5 yuan/person
Daily hours: 8:00-18:00



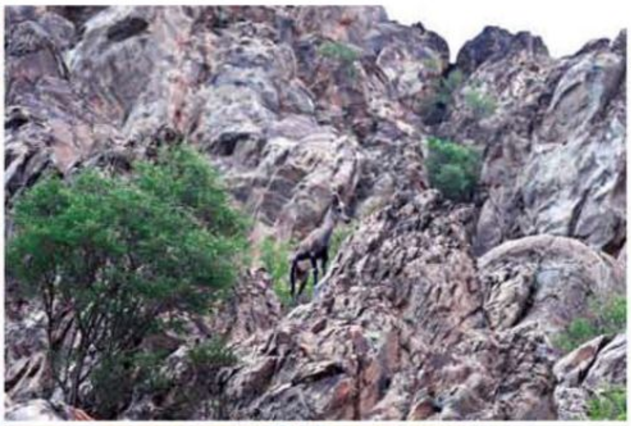
Rock carvings of human faces.



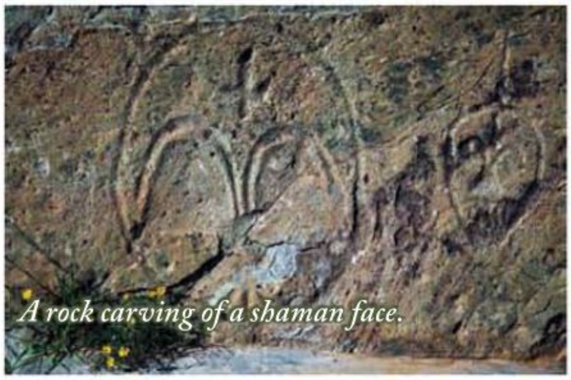
The hand on the right is believed to be a tribal leader's.



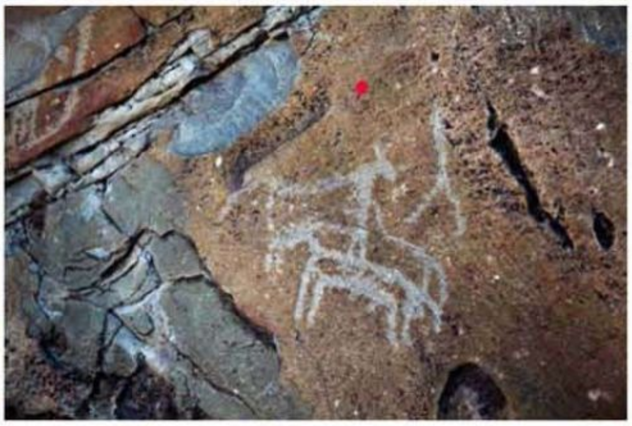
The famous Helan rock painting—The God of the Sun.



Himalayan blue sheep abound on the rocky terrain. by Wan Quan



A rock carving of a shaman face.



An image of animals mating.

A SCULPTOR'S STORY

Text by Tan Xingyu

Photographs courtesy of the National Art Museum of China

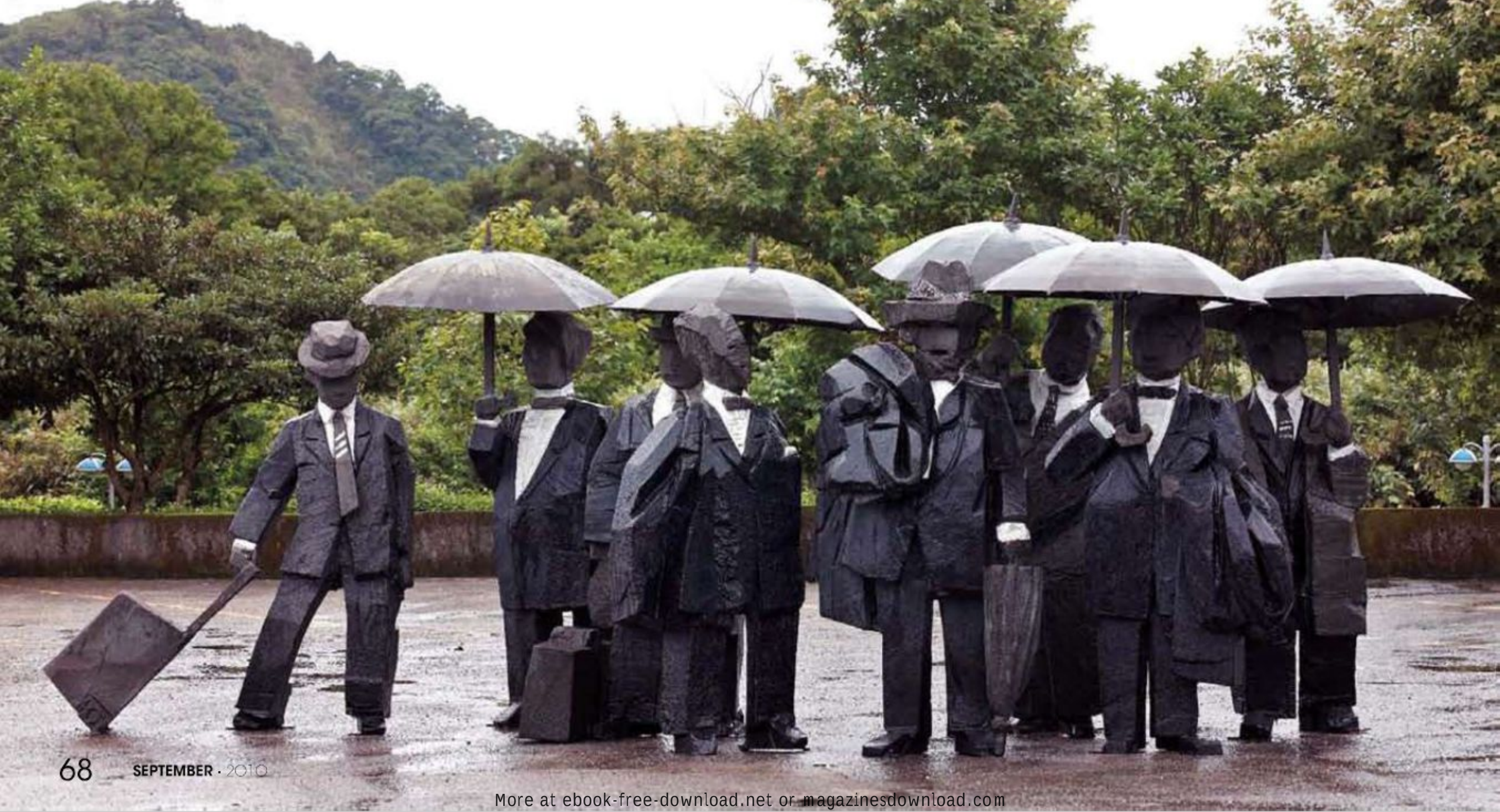
Who is Zhu Ming?

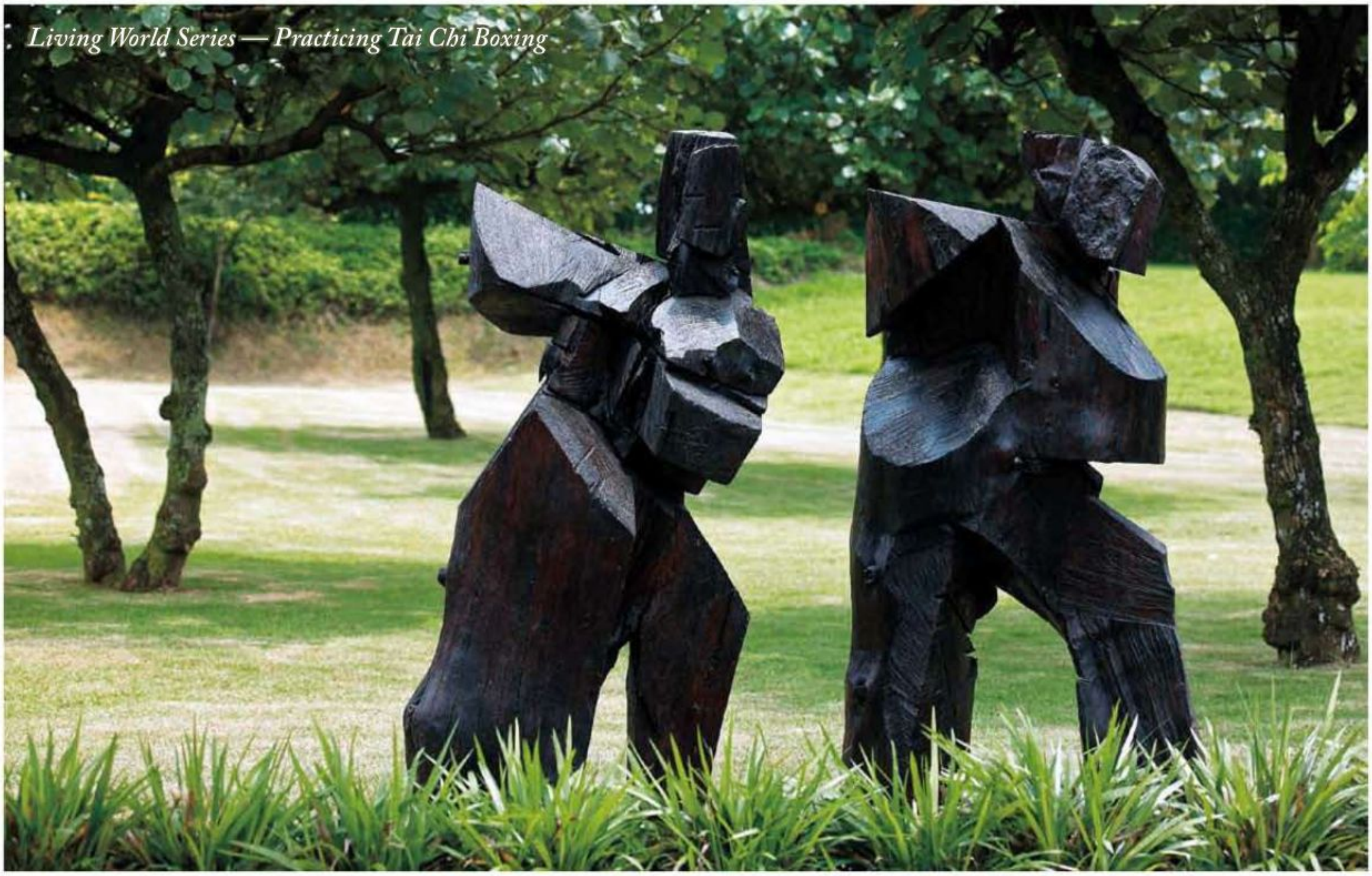
Though somewhat unfamiliar on the Chinese Mainland, his name is well-known throughout Taiwan. Zhu is one of the first modern Chinese artists to earn worldwide acclaim. For those who don't know his name, his impressive body of work speaks for itself.

In contrast to the majority of modern artists, Zhu Ming did not receive formal artistic education. He was born Zhu Chuantai in 1938, into an impoverished farmer's family in Miaoli County, Taiwan. After Zhu completed primary school, his father could no longer afford increasing tuition. Zhu was sent instead to become an apprentice sculptor at the local Matsu temple, working under an old master called Li Jinchuan.

There, he started to learn engraving and painting, which laid the foundations for his future development. For three years, under Li Jinchuan's careful instruction, Zhu developed his individual style. In a later interview

Living World Series — Gentlemen





Living World Series — Practicing Tai Chi Boxing

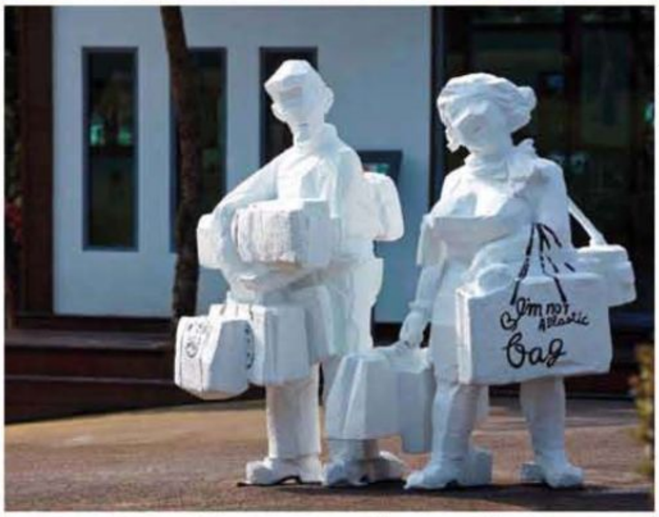
with the Discovery Channel, he expressed sincere gratitude to his teacher for all his hard work and patience during that time.

He said he had learned two valuable lessons: The first was that he must master the art of sketching. The teacher had told him that, "In order to make excellent sculptures, you need to master the basics of art instead of imitating others' pictures or patterns. A sculptor who does not know how to sketch is like an architect who builds houses without knowing how to draw blueprints."

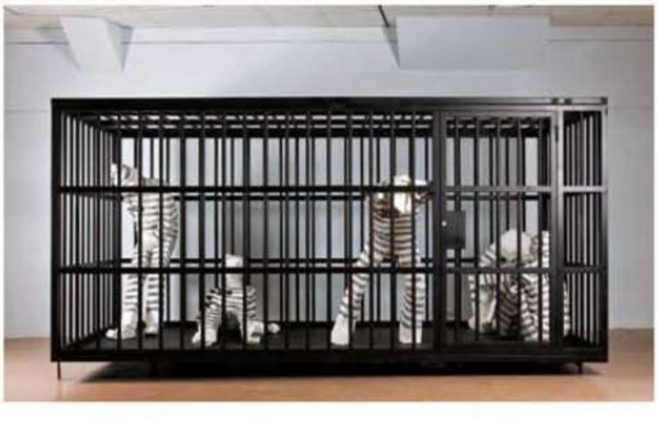
The second lesson was to develop strong carving skills. "Practicing carving is crucial," the teacher had told him. "All strokes must be exact: only carve an inch deep if the needed depth is an inch. Without accurate carving skills, you'll never meet the customers' needs."

It didn't take long for young Zhu Chuantai to make a name for himself locally. Whenever an idol was needed for a temple, people would call him. He was always reliable, and his style differed greatly from his counterparts. Zhu quickly learned to question the limitations of folk sculpture. He hoped to find a way out of over-reliance on traditional designs and become an artist who could express his individuality. Almost immediately, he stood out from the crowd with his talent and effort and won a top prize when he entered his very first exhibition in 1966.

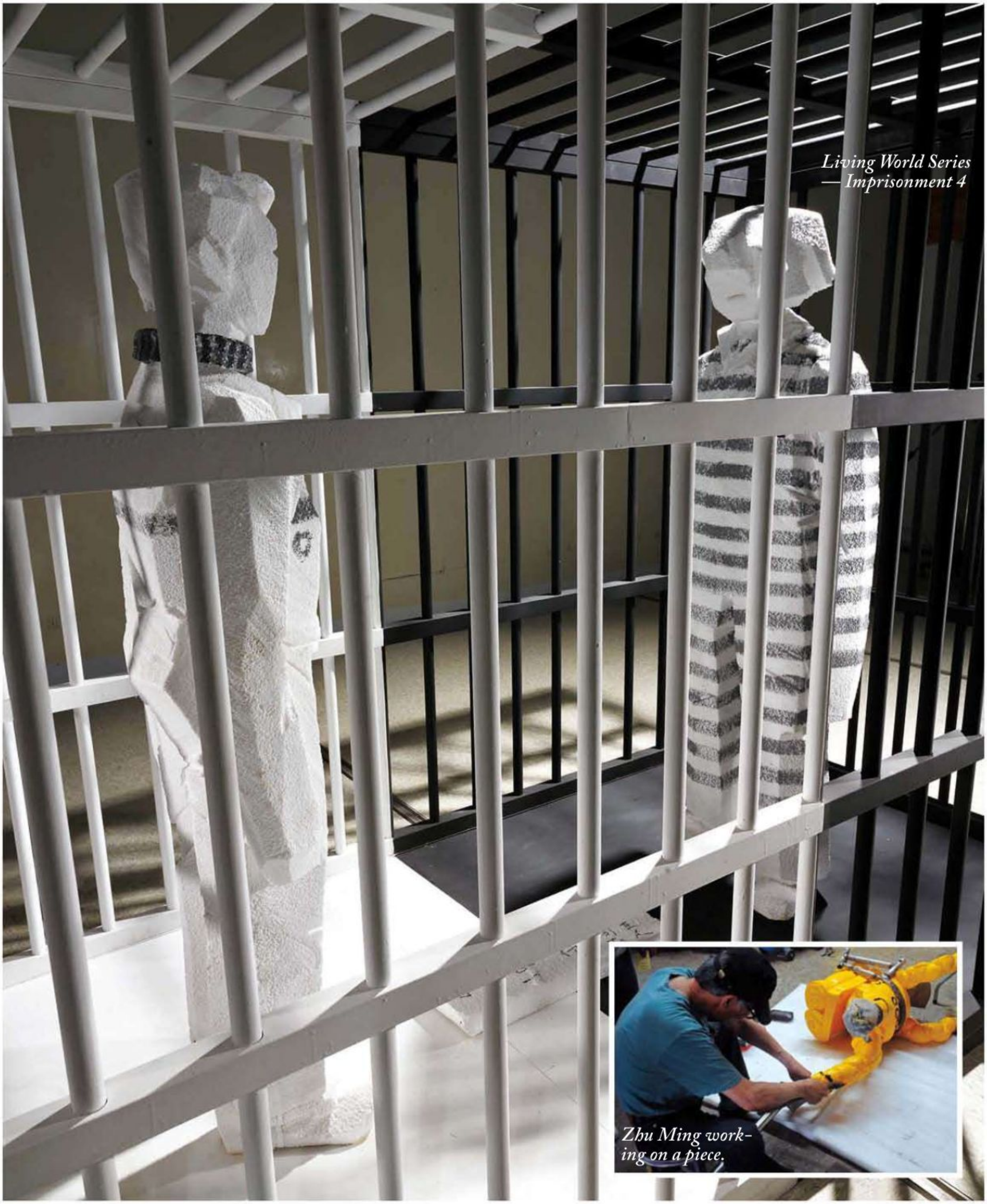
For an artist who only attended primary school and didn't receive formal training, instead learning his craft



Living World Series 2



Living World Series — Imprisonment 1



Living World Series — Imprisonment 4

Zhu Ming working on a piece.

from an aged sculptor at the local temple, this prize was a proud achievement. But Zhu Chuantai treated it as insignificant. He wanted to make further progress.

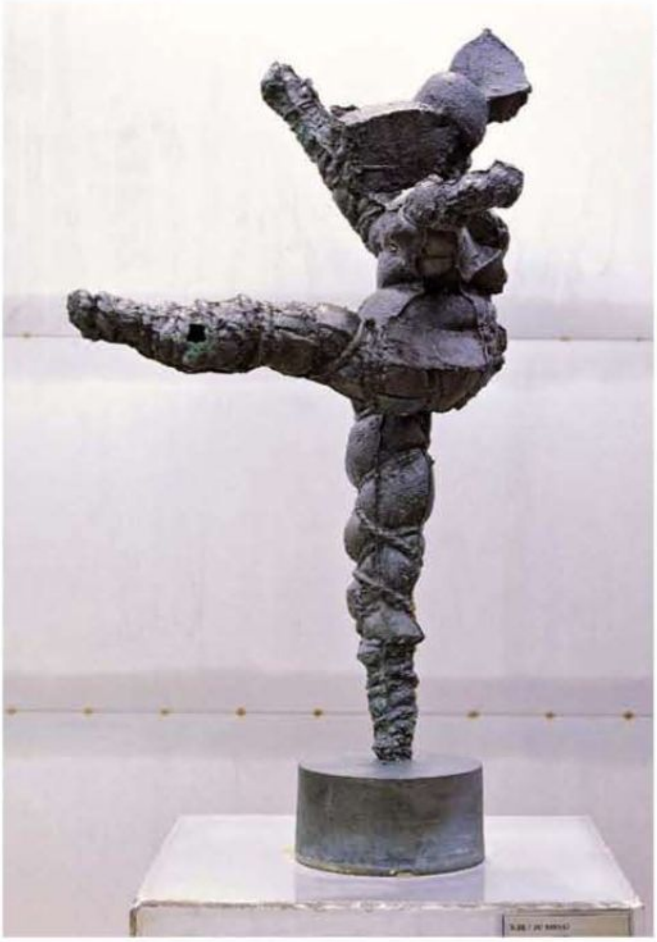
At the age of 31, after a few career twists and turns, he became a student of the famous sculptor Yang Yingfeng. Yang was at that time the most celebrated sculptor in Taiwan, and had studied in Rome, Beijing and Tokyo. One of the first things he told his new charge was to change his name: "Zhu Chuantai" had acquired too much recognition, and he believed it was an obstacle to further artistic progress. Zhu must forget past achievements and resist indulging in self-admiration. And this is how Zhu Chuantai became "Zhu Ming".

In Yang Yingfeng's opinion, Zhu had learned sufficient carving skills from his experience at the temple. But he was worried that Zhu might rigidly adhere to details and overlook the macro effect of the work. He therefore encouraged Zhu to undergo a process of "abandoning", which meant "unlearning" all his proficient skills and purposefully forgetting the patterns in his mind. Yang asked Zhu to "get rid of form and leave reality behind in order to realize his true spirit and eventually establish a new style of his own."

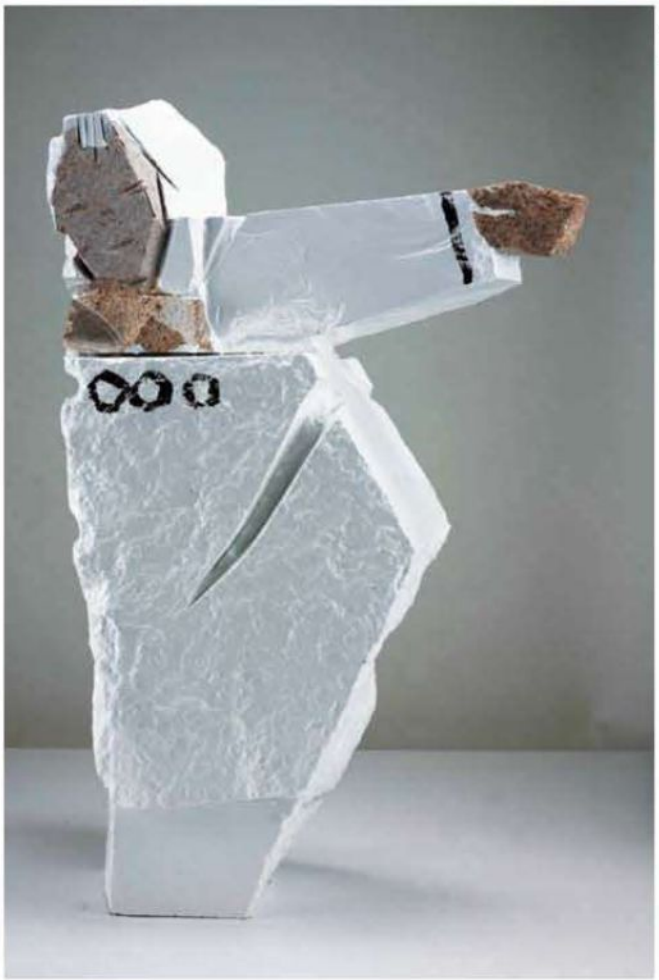
Teacher Yang helped Zhu Ming to affirm his sense of self, emphasizing the features of oriental aesthetics and "the power of simplicity." Zhu Ming recalled the lessons of his temple days stressing simulation, delicacy and brightness. But Yang taught him to "get rid of over-delicacy" and "embrace the basic." It took time, but Zhu slowly began to develop a rougher, more courageous carving style. From time to time, Yang reminded him of the importance of Chinese elements, and that he should not abandon the styles of his ancestors, even if he had become inevitably influenced by Western carving.

These "Chinese elements" are perhaps the most appealing aspect of Zhu Ming's works. After his "Tai Chi Series" was exhibited four years ago, Zhu's art was displayed again at the National Art Museum of China in Beijing on July 19, 2010. This showcase featured sculptures carved over a career spanning more than 30 years, displaying the development of what the artist called his "World Series." The latest piece of his work, "World Series – Imprisonment," made its debut at this exhibition. A perfect example of Zhu Ming's unusual brand of humor, the work presents a happy new couple locked in a cage like prisoners.

The caption for the piece reads: "If marriage fetters life, a couple will lose the freedom and detachment such as that enjoyed by fish, which prefer to swim freely and alone rather than care for each other's misery. As the couple interferes with each other instead of supporting each other, the congenial marriage will inevitably turn into a tomb of love." Zhu Ming stressed that "imprisonment" is the transformation from puzzlement to enlightenment. To reside in heaven or on earth depends only on an impulse, a sudden realization. As a Buddhist saying goes, the butcher who lays down his knife becomes a Buddha. "If the figures in the sculpture are enlightened and willing to walk out of the cage, they will cast off the chains of their lives."



Living World Series — Ballerina



Living World Series — Painted Wood

THE 6TH WORLD CHOIR GAMES IN SHAOXING

Text by Zhu Taotao and Shen Yifei
Photographs by Qiu Dali

Interkultur President Guenter Titsch rings the Bell of Peace, signaling the WCG's commencement.

Coinciding with the 2500th anniversary of the founding of the city of Shaoxing, the 6th World Choir Games brought stunning harmonies to the city on July 15th, 2010.

Held every other year for more than a decade, the World Choir Games are sometimes nicknamed the "Choir Olympics". The 2010 installment attracted over 400 choirs from 83 countries and regions to perform in over 100 concerts.

"China is an ancient civilization with vocal acrobatics thousands of years old," remarked World Choir Games (WCG) artistic director Dr. Ralf Eisenbeis. "Sha-

Pulses race at the grand opening ceremony.

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oxing is home to a long history and a profound cultural foundation. Bridges are as vital to this watery city as to cultural exchanges. The choir competitions feature songs from a variety of countries, becoming like choral bridges to promote mutual understanding and ultimately world peace."

African Passion

Scheduling put the World Choir Games right on the heels of football's World Cup held in South Africa. The sporting competition injected considerable excitement and passion throughout the continent of Africa, which was also evident in the efforts of their singers at the WCG.

The day we arrived in Shaoxing, we had the pleasure of seeing South Africa's Kearsney College Male Choir rehearse. The room was crowded with 52 singers whose bobbing heads moved rhythmically. A slogan on the wall reads: "People become great due to dreams while they succeed due to actions."

"Up and down, hurry up, go..." instructed a leader as the group practiced squatting and rising in unison. The tinkling of pianos, pounding of drums, and hum of voices reverberated through the building. The rehearsal was so passionate that curious onlookers crowded just outside the door to sneak a peek.

At the contest.

Tygerberg Children's Choir sings passionately at a grand evening party sponsored by Guyuelongshan Shaoxing Wine Co., Ltd.

The Kearsney College Choir won one gold and two silver medals at the 4th WCG in 2006 in Xiamen, and at the 2008 event held in Graz, Austria, it took home three golds and one silver. The choir is currently ranked 17th in the Musica Mundi World Rankings.

During a break, *China Pictorial* rushed at the chance to interview their conductor, Bernard Kruger, and team captain KG Segole. "We are rehearsing a number called 'Stampede'," explained Kruger as he stopped to catch his breath. "It presents a happy scene of animals running and jumping joyfully on the African steppe. For this WCG, we've prepared four contrasting songs in genres of religion, folk, modern, and pop. Folk rhyme with rich African flavor is our secret weapon."

The group started touring Asia at the beginning of July with a program called "Absolute Africa," with Shaoxing their last stop. "We've just been to Taiwan and Japan," recalled team captain KG Segole. "Audiences were enthusiastic and the atmosphere was hot."

The choir's most senior member, Siyabong Hadebc has been with the group for five years. "I joined the choir when I was 13," he explains. "Five years have passed and I still love it. In fact, choir is similar to the World Cup. Every participant must unleash his strength, and team solidarity is crucial."

The tension in the room could be cut with a knife. The interpreter revealed that the conductor wasn't entirely happy with the timing of the interview because young singers can be easily distracted.

After their performance, Kruger had more to say. "Our choir did a good job, but this is a very competitive event. Many other groups had their own distinctive characteristics and also performed well." At the end of the

Choir members practice earnestly during rehearsal.

Tygerberg Children's Choir members shed tears of excitement on the podium.

Games, Kearsney College went home with one gold and one silver medal.

Two other South African choirs stood out in this year's WCG: Stellenbosch College Choir was the champion in both mixed chorus and modern music, and the other was Tygerberg Children's Choir, which prevailed in religious music and folk rhyme.

Stunning Awards Ceremony

On the morning of July 19, more than 13,000 singers from 300 choirs hailing from five continents gathered for the Awards Ceremony. A magnificently decorated stage, magical lighting, and inspiring music soothed the audience as they waited for the new "Choir Olympic" champion to be named.

"Oh oh oh, when I get older, I will be stronger..." the Tygerber Children's Choir started the celebration before any award was presented. While waving the national flag of South Africa, the kids performed the popular World Cup song "Waving Flag" for the excited audience. The enthusiastic youngsters lived up to expectations when they accepted their religious and folk rhyme gold medals. On stage, the warmth of their voices was an inspiration to all.

Stellenbosch College Choir's score of 95.75 in modern music was good enough to make them champions.

Joyful vuvuzela horns resounded throughout the Award Ceremony.

Burly singer JD Labuschagne wrapped himself in a national flag and led his teammates galloping around the venue. He later recalled, "When the host called out our choir's name, I felt all my blood rush from my toes to my brain. My blood tingled!"

Even after leaving the podium, a singer named Vincent from Indonesia's Voca Erudita Student Choir, the champion in indoor mixed chorus, couldn't calm her nerves. "I'm so excited, but with mixed feelings," she explained. "All our devotion to preparation was worthwhile." The 19-year-old from the city of Java followed a grueling practice schedule for eight months along with her 30 teammates.

"During the last eight months, from registering, preliminary competition to today's final performance, we spent six days a week training," she continues. "We already won the national championship of Indonesia before WCG. Now, we can proudly call ourselves world champions."

Music Connecting People

Music has no boundaries. When asked what they thought of Shaoxing, members of the Kearsney College choir displayed a thumbs up. "Beautiful! Clean!" they remarked. "Unlike our hometown, the city has many trees and hills." Members demonstrated that the memory of the opening ceremony was still fresh, recalling the Chinese song "Orchids." Captain KG Segole remarked, "The melody is so beautiful. I always wanted to learn Chinese or Southern Fujian dialect. I will start with this song."

What can choirs bring to people's souls? International Cultural Exchange Foundation Chairman Günter Titsch asserts that choirs help people from different countries understand each other and move closer together. Ultimately, the event will boost the global reputation of Shaoxing after it left a good impression on the thousands of participants from throughout the world.

Practicing moves at a rehearsal.

About the World Choir Games:

World Choir Games is the world's biggest chorus contest, known informally as the "Choir Olympics". It is organized every two years by the German-based INTURKULTUR Foundation e.V. (International Cultural Exchange Foundation). It is the newest, liveliest and most influential choral event in the world. The 1st WCG was held in July 2000 in Linz, Austria, and the 4th was held in 2006 in Xiamen, China.

At rehearsals, choir members were busy assembling instruments.

Choir members from South Africa practice writing Chinese characters during a rehearsal break.

16TH ASIAN GAMES Guangzhou 2010

Thrilling Games Harmonious Asia

Dressing the Games

Text by Chen Biao
Photographs by Chen Jian

June 20, 2010, was a day of turbulent weather, dominated by frequent rain interrupting burning sunlight, and the day marked the launch of the Asian Games Songs Contest.

Exactly one year earlier, Gao Xiupeng, a graduate student from Guangzhou Sports College, joined 27 teammates to participate in the national cheer squad trials sponsored by Chinese beverage producer Jianlibao. Meanwhile, Jin Hui, vice president of the Art School of South China Agricultural University, was busy preparing a bid to design the official uniform of the Asian Games.

Xu Yonghong, director of the Culture Department of GAGOC.

The Greatest Game of Her Life

Jin Hui's bid was successful. "I prefer *Ink & Color* of the 16 designs for official uniforms," the designer remarked, "because it's a break from the Beijing Olympic design. As always, we received both positive and negative feedback from the judges." Jin's heart swelled with emotion when her work was unveiled on May 18, 2010, as the official uniform of the 16th Asian Games.

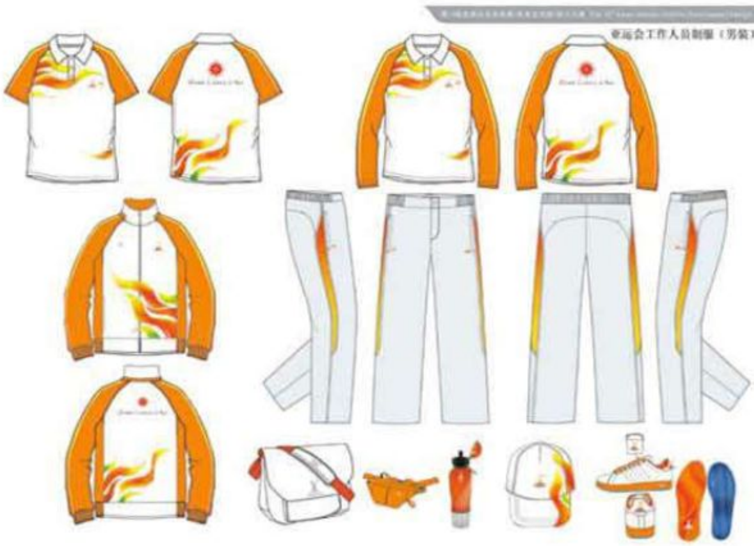
Back in January 2009, Jin Hui and her team made the decision to design uniforms for the Asian Games. They would be the sole candidate from an institute of higher learning in Guangdong Province. Pressure on the team increased when they learned that the Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology would be amongst their opponents.

"We were confident in our ability to beat other entries from Guangdong," recalls Jin, "but competition from an institute with a stellar reputation and loads of experience from the Beijing Olympics was a different story."

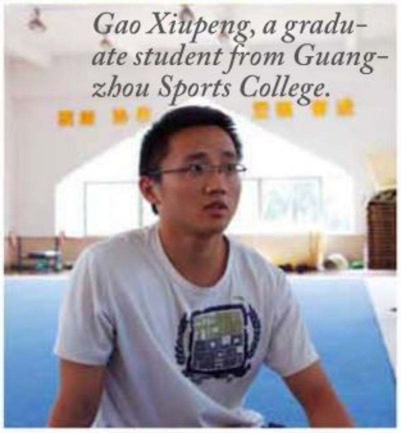
"GAGOC [Guangzhou Asian Games Organizing Committee] required three series of uniforms," Jin explains, "one for the working staff, another for volunteers, and the other for technical officials. Each series is composed of nine items, including short sleeves, long sleeves, coat, trousers, canteen, and cap. We were asked to hand over 15 plans." Her team made 16 plans, which required constant work, day and night.

The awards party for the 15 songs selected for the 2010 Asian Games. courtesy of GAGOC

Jin Hui, vice president of the Art School of South China Agricultural University.


亚运会工作人员制服（男装

The uniform for male working staff.



Gao Xiupeng, a graduate student from Guangzhou Sports College.

The cheer squad from Guangzhou Sports College.

Three elements were requested by GAGOC for the design of the official uniforms: Chinese characteristics, Cantonese flavor, and Guangzhou appeal. "Our primary concern was to escape the shadow of the Olympics and blaze a new trail," Jin explains. "We divided our team into several groups to research the flavor of Lingnan Culture: the Pearl River, lion dances, the goat, bombax flowers, and Canton enamels."

"*Ink & Color* is a work filled with elements of traditional Chinese painting," asserts Jin, "and we fused it with our inspiration from Lingnan style ink and color paintings."

Jin and her team were apprehensive about their chances of success because they are not experts in traditional Chinese painting. Their limited budget meant inviting master painters would be out of the question. Knowing they were on their own, the team scoured the internet for images of masterpieces, and gathered everything they could find. After creating their first design, the group agreed that something was missing. They began to draw and paint original work with the help of a computer to tweak the colors.

Their deadline fell on May 6, 2009. One judge left Jin Hui with encouraging words soon after the appraisal. "You have a good understanding of Lingnan Culture, and your design is full of vigor and vitality." Their big day fell on September 19, 2009, when they finally received the good news.

More Involvement

For Gao Xiupeng and his teammates, their big day fell on May 15, 2010. The members could hardly hold back tears when a judge declared them champions of the final trials for the national cheer squad competition.

"All of our hard work was worthwhile," smiles Gao. "The other candidates had only 20 team members each, but with our 28, it was often difficult to schedule training because my teammates are from different grades."

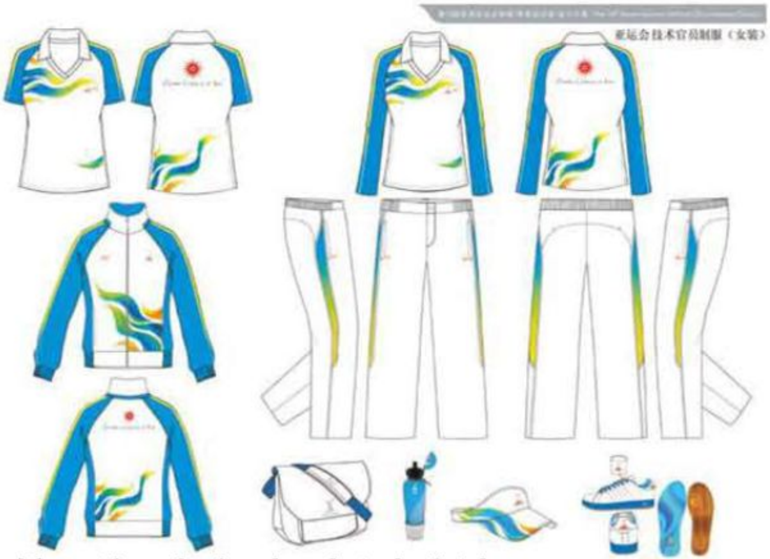
"Cheerleading is a collective endeavor with high physical demands," remarks Xu Zhongqiu, coach and deputy director of the Art Department of Guangzhou Sports College, "but state of mind is even more important. The teams are showcasing the progress of cheerleading in China. Since the sport came to China in 2001, great efforts have been made by China Student Aerobics and Rhythmic Gymnastics Associations, and many institutes of higher learning across the country have established cheer squads. There is a wide variety of choices for gymnastics techniques and dance genres such as jazz and hip hop."

According to Xu Yonghong, who also acts as director of GAGOC's Culture Department, selective trials were held in 363 colleges and universities in 68 cities across China since March 2009, attracting 20,182 competitors from 1,014 teams, and more than 100 million viewers watched them on TV.

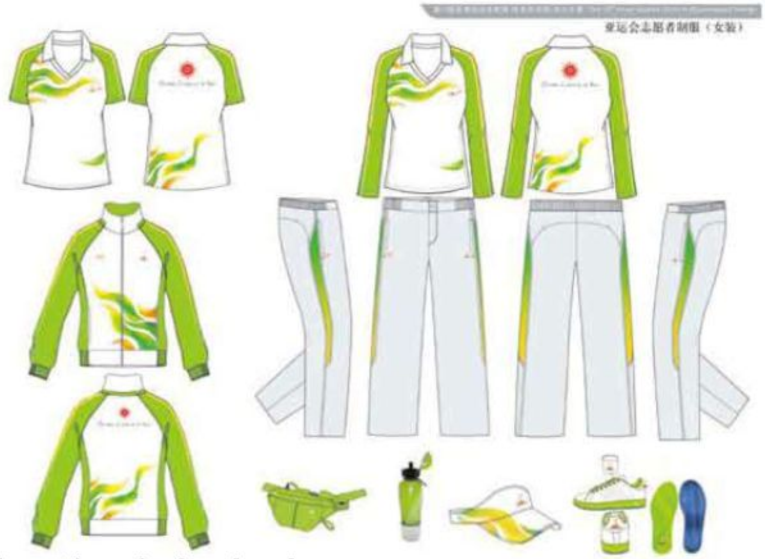
Another major campaign that joined in welcoming the Asian Games was the choral contest of the Games songs, which was launched on June 20, 2010. Guangzhou has a solid choral foundation, with plentiful local choirs, the best of which were selected to perform at the evening party to launch a 100-day countdown as well as at the closing ceremony of the Games.

Additionally, dramas will be staged, both domestic and imported. During the Asian Games, about 50 dramas will be presented in addition to performances by local troupes.

Experts believe that the upcoming Asian Games present a rare opportunity to significantly mature the performing arts market. The diverse performances will undoubtedly attract throngs of locals who would not normally patronize theater.


亚运会技术官员制服（女装）

The uniform for female technical officials.


亚运会志愿者制服（女装）

The uniform for female volunteers.

Official uniforms for the Guangzhou Asian Games.

China World Hotel, Beijing Launches The "Autumn Giving, Embrace – Beijing Charity Moon Cake Collection 2010"

China World Hotel launches the "Autumn Giving, Embrace – Beijing Charity Moon Cake Collection 2010" to raise funds for their local beneficiary, Hua Ao school for children from low-income migrant parents. This initiative represents the hotel's continuing commitment to support local underprivileged communities under the group's CSR umbrella of "embrace," which focuses on caring for people. The box of four moon cakes is priced at Rmb138 per box. Rmb50 from each box sold will go towards improvements of the schools' basic facilities. To order it, please contact the China World Hotel moon cake sales counters telephone:(8610) 65053285,65052266 extension 5722,5723, e-mail: fbreservations.cwh@shangri-la.com

Mid-autumn Festival @ Swissotel Beijing

On the day of full moon, it symbolizes "Reunion", where families get-together for a sumptuous meal, and enjoy their favorite taste of Moon cake. For this celebration, Swissôtel Beijing has whipped up an enticing array of these delicacies to rejoice the "Reunion". Swissôtel Beijing has prepared 3 categories moon cake gift box, which name Joyful Autumn(6pcs), Harmony Moon (8pcs), Delightful Exquisite (6pcs). Traditional flavors of moon cake are Red lotus seed with egg yolk, Mixed nut with ham, Red bean paste, Black sesame paste, Jujube and Green tea paste.
For more information and place an order, please call ease call 6553 2288 ext. 2148 or 13810229471, attention to Mr. Nathan Ma, or just come to the hotel lobby for more details.

Shangri-la's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing Presents Mid-autumn Moon Cakes and Hampers

Starting 16 July 2010, guests can browse and purchase a wide-ranging selection of mid-autumn moon cakes with special and traditional fillings, in an array of themed-packaging, as well as festive hampers from Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Beijing.
Six different box collections are available with moon cakes of various flavours and fillings, giving a mix of traditional, contemporary and healthy selection.
Shangri-La's Kerry Centre Hotel, Bejing's moon cake order form can be downloaded from www.shangri-la.com/cn/property/beijing/kerrycentre/dining. For more information, please refer to our Mooncake E-brochure via www.enewshotel.com/kerrycentremooncake.

Mid-autumn Festival @ Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown

Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown would like to join you in celebrating this special occasion. There kinds of perfect moon cake gift set with a rich variety of fillings are available for you, your family, friends and associates. The Standard Moon Cake Box at RMB148 with six pieces of moon cake, two kinds of Deluxe Moon Cake Box at RMB188 with 6 pieces of moon cake and at RMB368 with 8 pieces of moon cake, and Moon Cake Hamper at RMB688, including one box of 6-piece-cake Deluxe Moon Cake, one bottle of red wine, one box of exquisite tea, and 4 kinds of fruit.

Sale Spot: Lobby level of Holiday Inn Beijing Downtown,

98 Beilishilu Xichengqu, Beijing, China, 100037

Tel: (86) 10-68338822-7116, 7146 Fax: (86) 10-68340696

Middle Autumn Festival InterContinental Beijing Financial Street

Zen is an ideal restaurant for family or friends to celebrate the Mid- Autumn Festival. "Family Reunion" and "Great Fortune" set menus are especially designed for the festival. From August to September, order these two set menus in advance, and receive one box of "Prosperous Future" or "Brilliance" moon cake gift box.
The hotel also sells nine types of moon cake gift boxes for you to enjoy with your family, friends or business partners. Enjoy creative boxes and delicious moon cakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival!
Family Reunion Banquet: CNY 588+15% service charge per person
Great Fortune Banquet: CNY 888+15% service charge per person
For more information: +86 10 5852 5105 or 5852 5913

Legendale Hotel Beijing Moon cake 2010

The Mid-Autumn Festival is an auspicious celebration on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar. It is a time of harmony, blissful family reunion and good cheer. This year, Legendale Hotel Beijing grandly presents you with four supreme types of exquisite moon cake gift box, named Shining Moon, Snow Moon, Crescent Moon and Autumn Moon.
Each of the four Moon Cake Gift Boxes is distinctive, both in texture and essence, and exudes an authentic flavor that is especially crafted for your enjoyment.

Moon cake Selling Hotline: +86 10 8511 3388 ext. 8780.

Hilton Opens China's First and only Luxury Airport Hotel at World's Second Busiest Airport

Hilton Hotels, the brand that invented the airport hotel concept, again sets a new standard with the opening of the first-ever luxury airport hotel in China. The grand opening of Hilton Beijing Capital Airport hotel and conference facility highlights the two-year anniversary of Beijing Capital Airport's Terminal 3 and continues to expand the services connected to the world's second busiest passenger airport.

Located one minute from BCA Terminal 3 by free shuttle bus, the Hilton Beijing Capital Airport is in close proximity to the Express Rail station and is only 16 minutes to the city centre, and a 10 minute drive to the new China International Exhibition Center.

Read more about Hilton Beijing Capital Airport at www.hiltonglobalmediacenter.com/Beijing-CapitalAirport.

Celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival

In celebration of Mid-Autumn Festival, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun has specially prepared an array of moon cakes with traditional recipes and sugar free mooncakes to cater all you needs. The mooncakes are specially packaged featuring the auspicious red festive colors that symbolize peace and harmony. An ideal gift for friends and business associates to share this joyous occasion with.
For more information, please call +86 10 5993 8888.

Crab-licious

Let's indulge in this Crab Season only @ Rouge & Valley Café in Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun.
Enjoy your mouth watering hairy crab specially prepared by our chefs. It is the best choice for entertaining your business clients or partner over lunch & dinner.
The Chinese Master Chef He's recommendations will not fail to disappoint you or your taste buds.
Receive a complimentary hairy crab per person with Semi-buffet lunch & dinner orders.
Semi-buffet lunch RMB 98/per person, Semi-buffet dinner RMB168/per person.All subject to 15% service charge.
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Taoist Temple 山顶道观

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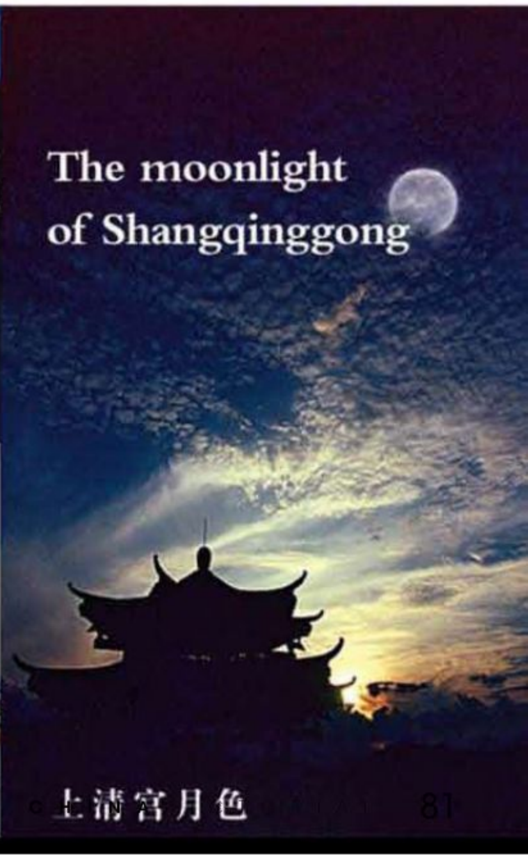

The moonlight of Shangqinggong

上清宫月色

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